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ABSTRACT

This collection presents essays on contemporary issues facing community colleges written by fellows in Princeton University's Mid-Career Fellowship Program and dealing with such issues as critical thinking, faculty perceptions, educational technology, interdisciplinary courses, cooperative learning strategies, the college culture, faculty and administration relations, and team teaching. The following essays are provided: (1) "Questioning Critical Thinking: Funny Faces in a Familiar Mirror," by W. Allen Ashby; (2) "The Image of the Community College: Faculty Perceptions at Mercer County Community College," by Marilyn L. Dietrich; (3) "Community Colleges and the Virtual Community," by Robert Freud; (4) "Interdisciplinary Classes," by Freda Hepner; (5) "Student as Teacher: Cooperative Learning Strategies in the Community College Classroom," by Carol L. Hunter; (6) "Generational Clash in the Academy: Whose Culture Is It Anyway?" by Pat Kalata; (7) "Faculty/Administration Relations in Community Colleges," by Joyce A. Kennett; (8) "A Greying Faculty: Challenge or Stumbling Block to the Twenty-First Century," by Leonard T. Kreisman; and (9) "An Examination of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary Courses," by Bud McKinley and Neil Warrence. (TGI)

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ISSUES OF EDUCATION AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ESSAYS BY FELLOWS

IN THE MID-CAREER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

JUNE 1996

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Questioning Critical Thinking:

Funny Faces in a Familiar Mirror

> *Any new idea, Mahound, is asked two questions. The first is asked when it's weak:* WHAT KIND OF AN IDEA ARE YOU? *Are you the kind that compromises, does deals, accommodates itself to society, aims to find a niche, to survive; or are you the cusssed, bloody-minded, ramrod-backed type of damnfool notion that would rather break than sway with the breeze? -- The kind that will almost certainly, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, be smashed to bits; but, the hundredth time, will change the world.*
>
> "What's the second question?" Gibreel asked aloud.
>
> *Answer the first one first.* (Rushdie 335)

W. Allen Ashby
Union County College
Dr. Ted Rabb
History 520
Princeton University
1 June 1996

Faces in the Classroom Mirror:

It is Wednesday evening, and I am 45 minutes into my 75 minute World Literature class. I am lecturing on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and I am trying to explore his *Doppelganger* pairings of names and events, a haunted house world where it is difficult to tell what's real and what's the reflection in the mirror. I have a list of over 30 of these destabilizing duplicates, beginning with the two major characters, Gibreel Farishta (the archangel) and Saladin Chamcha (the devilish Muslim Knight of Faith). They are falling to earth together. Page one. Seed pods. Sperm. The plane has exploded in mid-air. They are flapping their arms, and singing, locked in a literal transforming embrace. My list also includes such pairs as Gibreel's dream sequences of Mahound, the European devil name for the mirrored historical Prophet Muhammad: in history he has his twelve wives, in Gibreel's dream they are prostitutes in a brothel. It's like this. A mirror image of a mirror. I am talking from my notes, explaining that the fear and attraction that some of the characters have to the foot devil (Chamcha) that is stalking their dreams in London is an instinctual fear, when Jami raises her hand:

"Yes?"

"Dr. Ashby, I was just wondering. I mean you just said 'instinct,' but humans don't have any instincts, do they?"

"They don't have instincts?" And I can feel the credulity filling my face.

"No, I don't think so. I mean my psychology teacher told me last week that humans don't have instincts."

"That's right," Fred chips in. "That's what I read in my psychology book too."

I'm obviously baffled but before I can pick up the pieces, Ardelia is talking:

"You know I think he deserved it."

"Excuse me?" I say. "Who? Deserved what?"

"Rushdie," she says, "the *fatwa*."

"He deserves to be killed?"

"Yes. He slandered Allah."

"Oh, that's ridiculous" Tyrone says. "Anybody should be able to say anything they want. You can't kill somebody for words."

"Then why did you slap me in the car last Sunday when I told you I went out with Ranbir" Tyrone's girlfriend Celia asks, pivoting around from the seat in front of him so that she can face him? "You didn't respect my words, did you? You were just conducting your own personal *fatwa*."

{And in my inner ear I'm hearing Mahound's scribe, Salman (another double) who has altered Mahound's divine dictation, answering Baal's question "Why are you sure he [Mahound] will kill you?" by saying because "It's his Word against mine" (368).} But before Tyrone can answer, Karen has stepped in. "No," she interrupts, "you can't just say what you want. I mean you can't teach sex to young kids in school. As a parent you have to control what they hear and see on television and on computers. For example, if you teach evolution in school, then you have to teach creationism because evolution is just a theory."

And I turn to look at the clock. There are 29 minutes left and I know now I am not going to escape unscathed, not even if I could get back to my lecture notes. I too am falling to earth. The plane has exploded. It's a game of Hide and Seek, and I'm it.

* * * *

The End of the Beginning of Questioning:

This is a simple paper really, with a simple beginning and a simple end and so let me get to the punch line early and then if you don't have time to finish it (and to see what happened to my class) you can just relax and feel comfortable knowing that even if you missed the middle at least you got the end: to wit:

Thinking is questioning. Only, what is a question? **And** if thinking is questioning,

Then what are declarative sentences for?

So, I listen to Jami and Fred and their twin authorities on instincts: a colleague (?) and a text book, and what I really want to say to them is: "How do you know they are telling you the truth?" And I want to turn to Ardelia and ask her: "Would you kill him if you had the chance, or how about if they asked you to just stone him to death?" And I want to turn to Tyrone and Celia and ask them:

"When you offer someone an opinion, how are they supposed to know if it is valid for them?" And I want to turn to Karen and say "What? What? What? Can you just please connect the dots?"

But, of course, I don't say any of that. For a moment I just stare. And the class like a mirror stares back.

Mission Impossible:

But let me start at the real beginning, before the semester has even opened, before I have even written up my syllabus, before I even started teaching at the college 26 years ago. Let me start with our *Catalog* and our Mission Statement since, as much as anything else, ideally that should determine what it is that I am attempting to accomplish in my class. So, here is a piece of it, and though the numbering and spacing is mine, this is real enough (though what is unreal?).

The College (1) strives to promote in students
- (1a) a sense of responsibility for their own development and
- (1b) an understanding of their obligations as members of a democratic society

The College (2) fosters in students
- (2a) the desire to learn,
- (2b) the ability to think clearly and
- (2c) express themselves effectively,

the (3) habit of
- (3a) analytical and
- (3b) reflective thought, and

(4) an awareness of
- (4a) themselves,
- (4b) their heritage,
- (4c) other cultures, and
- (4d) their environment.

Now I'm the first to admit that it's no fun to poke a dead elephant, not even to see if it's dead and so I won't ask the obvious question in this paper on "Teaching For Critical Thinking", namely: Does anyone really ***think*** we are doing this? Students, parents, faculty, staff, members of the Board, local politicians, visitors from Vanuatu? Or let's say they do. Then how would I know if what I was doing is furthering this mission? And don't get me wrong. The goals are fine, even if I'm not quite sure of the difference between developing "a *sense* of responsibility" and developing responsibility, or even if I don't know how one "fosters . . . [a] desire," or even if I'm not quite sure what a "habit" of analytical and reflective thought is (it sounds like an instinct to me). No, for me, the problem is that no one, to my knowledge, is ***thinking*** about what these words mean. No one is helping me or the institution understand how I would know if I was {or was not} "promoting" and "fostering" these

laudable goals [though is that what thinking is: creating ways of measuring success and failure?]. And so consequently at this moment this Mission Statement seems to me to be an oxymoron and about as valid as Tyrone's "anyone should be able to say anything they want," which I guess they have.

Still, evidently one of my appointed Missions (2b and 3a & 3b) is to "foster in students the ability to think clearly . . . analytical[ly] and reflective[ly]." And so maybe I need to understand what *thinking* is and is not, and whether or not Jami and Fred, Ardelia, Tyrone and Celia, and Karen are on the edge of it or not, and if they are, what might push them over. They hide; I seek.

Nietzsche Grins:

[Rule 1: When you don't know what you are doing, back up as far as you can.]

Heidegger writes that "Western man (sic) from early on had to ask the question, *Ti estin epistēmē?* 'What is that--knowledge?'" (22). And he answers his own question by saying that traditionally "In Western history, knowledge is taken to be that behavior and that attitude of representing by which what is true is grasped and preserved as a possession" (23-24), "that truth is correctness" (34), a correspondence to a previously existing reality. Whereas for Nietzsche, Heidegger writes, "truth itself is an 'illusion,' a mirage" (25), it is only a perspective, and not true in itself. "As opposed to 'Being,'" he continues, "Nietzsche posits Becoming as a higher value" (65), and therefore "There is no 'true world' in the sense of something remaining the same in itself and eternally valid" (128). Truth, like knowledge, is an evaluation, a "will to power". For Nietzsche all facts are interpretations, bound to a particular perspective. The world **is** a mirror; it does not carry what we see, and therefore finally "We can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made" (Nietzsche 272). Seeing is creating. Or as Rushdie says: "Language is courage: the ability to conceive a thought, to speak it, and by doing so to make it true" (281). It **is** my Word against yours. Endlessly.

Grin and bear it. But, how do I know if Nietzsche is telling the truth? Or Muhammad? Or Mahound? Or Rushdie? Or Celia? Or to bring this closer to home: in my own classroom do I believe that I am teaching the truth? Do I want all my students to get the same answers on the tests I create? Because if I accept Nietzsche's understanding of truth, that it is something we create and not something that is already there before we enter the class, then this should change how I act in the class. But before I try to toss a bone to this dog, let me take a detour in order to set up this paper's central paradigm.

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The Faces of The Fifth Grade Children

The article was like a revelation to me, though as Rushdie says "To be born again, first you have to die" (403). So I guess the mirrored question is What died?

Jean Anyon teaches in the Education Department at Rutgers, Newark. Somewhere in the late 1970s she visited some fifth grade classes in four different New Jersey school systems and reported her findings in a book entitled *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work*. In her analysis (is this what *thinking* is?) she classified the schools by the median income of the families and by their jobs, and then she categorized the schools as "working class," "middle class," "affluent professional," and "executive elite". Then as she turned her attention to what exactly went on in the classroom she looked at four areas:

(1) the fundamental philosophical aim of the class,
(2) the role of the teacher's questions,
(3) what is most important, and
(4) the degree of control the students have in the classroom.

Sketched below is my interpretation of her interpretation. (Is such a summary of an article an indication of *thinking*?)

1. **Working class**:
   Work: assembly-line, gas stations, waitress, sales clerks.
   Income: near poverty level ($7M) to $12M = 40% of the people in the US.
   In school:
   The work is to follow steps, to follow rules, obey, copy, and follow rote behavior.
   The teachers ask no questions (unless to ask: did you understand? did you copy this down?). Rather they give orders.
   Atmosphere seems capricious, things belong to the teacher, no materials for the kids,
   Teachers often shout

2. **Middle class:**
   Work: police, construction, middle management, Burger King bosses.
   Income: $13-25M = 40% of the people in the US.
   In school:
   The work is to get the right answers. Students figure out the directions themselves, and try to find the right answer which results in a good grade.
   The teacher's questions are designed to test that you've read the material.
   Neatness is important.
   Boredom for all present.

3 **Affluent Professional:**

Work: cardiologist, lawyers, ad executives.
Income: $40-80M = 7% of the people in the US.
In school:

The work is creative activity carried out independently.
The teacher's questions ask students to expand, to give more details, to be more specific; emphasis is on student choice and decision making.
What's important is individual thought and personal expressiveness.
The children have some say in what will happen in class.

4 **Executive Elite:**

Work: CEOs, Presidents and Vice Presidents, Wall Street executives.
Income: $100M up = <1% of the people in the US.
In school:

The work is developing one's analytical intellectual powers.
The teacher's questions are to help reason through a problem. Rather than right and wrong answers, what's important is whether you agree or not.
Formal elements more emphasized than expressive: e.g. structure of plot rather than personal creativity.
Students are encouraged to take charge, teach classes, check each other.

For Anyon the bottom line is that economic class has predetermined a hidden structure of these fifth grade classrooms, and that "the 'hidden curriculum' of schoolwork is tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way" (59). In short, there are four kinds of thinking: for the "working class" there are rules and role behavior; for the "middle class" the aim is to find the right answers; for the "affluent class" the aim is personal expressiveness, to be able to justify your opinions by citing details; and for the "executive elite" there is the recognition that thinking is a process that does not lead to definite answers, but is an open-ended exploration.

And so at what hidden class level have we set up the Community College and our own classrooms?

Jami and Fred believe they have the right **answers**, because those answers correspond to a source outside of themselves, something they have heard and memorized, something that is true.

Ardelia believes her **conviction** is right because it corresponds to her cultural and religious upbringing.

Tyrone believes his **opinion** is right, and Celia believes her **feelings** are right.

And Karen believes her **ideas** are right because she is now ready to give me her **reasons** for them. But none of these students, at this moment, are ready to believe that they might be wrong, and that, for Anyon and for me, is the first failure of American education, because instead of teaching thinking we are teaching right and wrong. Right? Or wrong?

Cul de Sac:

The Mission Statement informs me that one of my missions ("Should I choose to accept it?") is to " foster the habit of reflective thought." Now " reflective thought" is a term coined and minted in 1933 by John Dewey, a term which was subsequently transubstantiated into "critical thinking" What Anyon has added to this discussion is the awareness that there are at least four levels of thinking, what I want to call ***"rote thinking"*** (memorization, like the multiplication tables, or how to drive home from work without really thinking about it), ***"right thinking"*** (which is predicated upon the notion of getting a right answer), ***"expressive thinking"*** (which more often than not involves personal opinions (which are believed to be right) illustrated and substantiated by facts), and true ***"critical thinking"*** (which uses the expressive techniques of evidence and proof, but which actually is open ended in its conclusion. In "critical thinking" the hypothesis you are trying to prove is actually perceived *by you* as a question: Nietzsche Grins). Hide and you shall seek.

By the way, as a cul de sac in this cul de sac, it is probably worth nothing that Anyon's four levels closely parallel Bloom's Taxonomy with its six levels of thinking: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. And it also, as we shall see, quite closely parallels Perry's "Nine Stages of Intellectual Development." But finally, as we try to exit from this cul de sac, I take it the implicit or explicit (and does it matter which it is?) question at the conclusion of Anyon's analysis is: "Do each or any or all of these fifth grade teachers know what they are doing?" And the problem is, it's a lose-lose situation: because if they do know, then why in the first three school systems would they develop kinds of thinking in their students that would so handicap them both personally and economically, and if they don't know, then what kinds of teachers are they? But this can get worse: "Mirror, Mirror on the wall . . . ." since if we invited Anyon to sit in on our classes for a semester, would she detect all four levels of thinking in our classrooms, and how much time would she detect being spent at each level?

What kind of an idea is this? And: Is there no way out?

Hydra Asks and Answers a Heady Question:

And now I know that I'm going to overstate my case, but hey, what's a case for, and whose case is it anyway? Let's call up the monster. Evidently one of Hydra's heads is immortal. It is **The Fundamental Principle** head. We are in the middle of it now. It speaks: It says:

> *That if there is not a critical question in the front of the classroom, then "critical thinking" is not going to occur.*

It may be useful information, it may be lifesaving information, but if it is not information in the service of a critical question, then it isn't "critical thinking." It may be entertainment, it may be aesthetically or personally meaningful, but if it isn't centered in a critical question, it isn't "critical thinking." It may be the semester's best rap session. Tyrone and Celia finally trash it out and everybody piles on, but no matter how much everyone shares opinions, feelings and personal stories, if it isn't centered in a critical question, then it isn't "critical thinking." [Though by the way, is there a place for rap in the classroom? You betcha. Because in such a class the students may be getting "an understanding of their obligations as members of a democratic society," "expressing themselves effectively," and becoming "aware of themselves [and] other cultures," all good Missions all, but hey, it still isn't "critical thinking."] And finally, we may be solving a real questionable problem: "If the oceans rise 6 feet by the year 2020, how much concrete will it take to keep Atlantic City above water?" But if we can solve it, then it isn't a critical question and it isn't "critical thinking." [Though again, is this activity valuable? Absolutely. Because when I take my clanging car to the mechanic do I want her to get the right answer? Absolutely! And when I tell the manager at Burger King: "Hold the tomato," I want him to hold that tomato. I want him to "get it right." Absolutely right. No wrong about it. But when the tomato is not there, it's still not *critical thinking*, not in Anyon's world, or Rushdie's, or Nietzsche's or in mine.] Because all of these are uncritical questions.

So, "critical thinking" isn't: information processing, aesthetic enjoyment, rap sessions or problem-solving. And furthermore if I ask a question I know the answer to, then "critical thinking" is not going to occur. And consequently the crucial question becomes: how do I get the classroom centered in a critical question? So: head to head, "Heeeere's Allen" asking Hydra the crucial (uncritical) question: "What are the characteristics of a critical question?" And here's her heady reply.

The Beginning of the End of Questioning:

In the first place (1) it has to be **felt** as real by everyone in the class. It must spark their curiosity because as Aristotle says, "All knowledge begins in wonder" and if the "wonder" isn't there, it's Teflon all the way down to the turtles. A tape recorder does not create meaning, and since, "we can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made" those students who don't fundamentally feel the question aren't going to be thinking critically. And how do you tell if they are genuinely caught by wonder? Well, the hands go up, everyone wants to talk. <u>*You*</u> can feel it. That's the first necessary characteristic. And the next: (2) is the student's ability to **state her position** about the

question. It's Karen's turn at the head of the class, and then (3) she has to **give sufficient evidence** facts, details and examples to make her perspective clear. (Ardelia has got to give reasons why Rushdie should be reduced to ashes, because faith is not *critical thinking*, not Ardelia's or Jami's or Fred's.) Nietzsche Grins. And next? (4) a **desire for dialogue**, an awareness that every position has a counter position, (a funny familiar face in the mirror) and that no position is absolute, and that all positions are personal perspectives. It is the awareness that your position is the beginning of a conversation and not the end. It is a desire to actually want to hear other opinions and the evidence behind them, and at some point (5) to be able **to state those opposing or alternative viewpoints** in your own words and with a clarity that your opposition can accept. Critical thinking is pluralistic. (6) a conscious realization that a **final closure is not going to be possible**. No poem, Auden says, is ever finished, it is only abandoned. So, critical thinking is not unanimity, and if a 100 means that everyone got the same answers, then it can't be *critical thinking*. But still more: (7) it is only *critical thinking* when the person can **connect** their perspective position to other dissimilar situations. In this respect Celia **is** *thinking critically* when she challenged Tyrone because she has told Tyrone that there is a disconnection between his opinion expressed to Ardelia in a classroom and his action expressed to her in a car. She has connected the dots in a line he cannot yet see. And finally, (8) it is only *critical thinking* when the thought can be **turned into a metaphor**, when Jami can say: "You know Dr. Ashby I might just be wrong, because my question to you was instinctual. I mean I didn't think about it at all before I said it. It's the same way I buy burgers, brush my teeth, and signed up for your class." And now we are really in the presence of thinking, don't you think?

If They are Trying to Sell it to You, It's Probably Because They Don't Want It:

So, you can only teach thinking by questioning. You can't teach thinking by teaching logic. "There is no experiential evidence that geometry necessarily improves one's ability to reason" (Shermis 5). And what is true of geometry is true of Latin and computers and most lecture and discussion classes, as it is also true of Mission Statements. And so the question becomes: If critical thinking only occurs in the face of a critical question, and if I am interested in fostering critical student thinking, then how can I get my classroom centered in a critical question? Let's do the praxis. Let's get that elephant to dance.

Nietzsche Goes to Class:

If Anyon is right and there are at least four kinds and levels of thinking, then there must also be four kinds and levels of corresponding questions. So, a "rote question" must be a question the

teacher asks that she, and she hopes the students, already know the answer to. A "right question" is one that requires reasoning, but the answer lies in an agreed upon source outside the answer and the answerer. We can look it up in a book. An "expressive question" lies mid-way between the truthfulness of a "right question", and the openness of a "critical question." The "expressive question" calls for an opinion that can be backed up by evidence.

But finally if what we really want to be able to do in the classroom is not just argue, debate and hurl words at each other like grenades, if what we want is to genuinely open ourselves to the exploration of ideas, then what we want is a "critical question." For in the presence of such a question the classroom stops being a battleground and becomes truly liberated. As Edward Said notes in another context, in the presence of such a question, the sibilant fights over the national boundaries dissolve and in Aimé Césaire's words, we recognize that "No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is a place for all at the rendez-vous of victory" (181). The old authorities are dissolved, deconsecrated, and instead of being separated by our partisan disagreements we are collectively engaged in the creation of truths which we are sharing with each other, even as we agree to disagree about which particular truth we will finally want to personally embrace.

But as I try to turn toward being more practical and eventually to return to my own classroom, let me start with the most difficult teaching paradigm to open to critical questions, namely the classroom as a lecture hall. For while it is true that from a student perspective that taking notes and struggling to get the right answers on objective tests doesn't seem to have anything to do with critical thinking, still from a teacher's perspective it is obvious that implicit in every lecture is a critical question. For example, implicit in Anyon's essay lecture was the question: "How can we make teachers aware that the kinds of questions that they ask, and don't ask, in a classroom perpetuate class structures?" And since that question doesn't have an answer, except as we individually try to enact it, it is a critical question hidden beneath the essay that we read.

So as teachers what we need to do in a lecture class is to get the critical question out in the open. Upfront. In Your Face. No more hide and seek. Found. And this can be done even in math classes, and if it isn't done then as teachers we are treating the students as if it doesn't really matter if they are there or not. Said would call this Imperialism and he would see in the students' boredom and random and unconscious acts of disruption a weak attempt at class struggle, an attempt by the students to devalue the classroom and their bondage to the Emperor in it.

So, let me try to get the question into the open, and let me start on the first day of class. Ira Shor says we should just begin with where we are. He says: "In my writing class [I] began with the question 'What is good writing?' In a math class, the question asked might be 'What is mathematics?' followed by 'What are addition, substraction, division, multiplication? Can you define them in your own words and experience?' . . . [in history] 'What is history?' This initial question could be followed by 'What history is most important to you? What do you want to know? Do you have a history? How would you find out about your history? Is your history different from your parents' or grandparents' history? Is history changing over the years, getting better or worse than it was in the past? Does history affect your daily life?'" (76).

What we are trying to do here is to connect what we are going to study during the semester with where the students actually are when they come into the classroom. By raising such fundamental questions the first day of class we are asking the students to begin a process of relating *everything* that will occur back to their own attempts to construct meaning, putting into practice Nietzsche's dictum that "We can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made" (272).

Then, as lecturers what we need to do is to concentrate each lecture into a set of questions, and write those questions on the board before the class begins or have a handout that we can distribute as the class begins. These questions for the lecture can be in all four question forms or in only some of them, but in every case they need to include at the end at least one "critical" question. For example in a biology class on the hand, a series of possible questions might be:

Rote:	What are the parts of the hand? What are the unique characteristics of the human hand?
Right:	How many bones, muscles and tendons are there in the human hand? And how do they function?
Expressive:	What are some accidents that could happen to the human hand, and what would be the results in each case?
Critical:	Why is it so difficult to create a robot that can pick up a glass of water? How does the movement of the hand compare to other movements the body can make? What are some disadvantages in having hands?

It is not necessary for the lecture to address all the questions, though it might be interesting to set aside the last 10 minutes to allow the students to single out and discuss one of these questions, or have the students write about one of the questions. The teacher could collect these responses and after each class randomly read and write comments on five of them and then hand them all back at

the next class. The students could keep their responses in a folder and from time to time the teacher could collect the folders to get an overview and to ensure that every student was getting some written response from the teacher during the semester.

Another possibility is to allow the students to ask the questions, to randomly hand out say five 3x5 cards and ask those students to turn the lecture into some questions, and then take the last 10 minutes and let the students read them out loud and answer them. Or again the teacher could ask every student to spend the last 2 minutes of the class writing out a "critical" question based on that day's lecture. These questions could be collected, or perhaps better yet have five students read theirs when the next class begins and briefly have the teacher and/or students respond to them. Or the students could put the questions on the blackboard before the class begins, as a form of Board Pass, or they could use these Board Passes to also ask questions about that day's readings before the lecture begins.

Or again, the teacher could create a set of questions a week or more in advance of the lecture and have the students, individually or in small groups, present a quick verbal report on them on the day of the lecture. Again, especially in the sense of "right" or "expressive" questions this would be quite easy to accomplish. For example, how does the blood circulate and what does it do for the body? What are the four major causes for the Civil War? What are three reasons this is a good novel? What does Freud's theory of the unconscious mean, and how valid is it? What is the process involved in solving bilinear equations and what might they be used for? Certainly there is plenty of evidence that "Students in [a] peer-teaching group spent more time on the material, rated themselves as more active in the learning process, and performed better on both informational and conceptual tests than students who were simply studying for themselves" (Kurfiss 48). And so even apart from the knowledge gained, there is an affective dimension to this process of getting students involved in the questions, rather than in just copying down the answers.

Then, if one aspect of "critical thinking" and "critical questioning" is to **connect** their perspective to other dissimilar situations, and be able to turn it into a metaphor, then at some point during the lecture process the whole subject matter of the lecture itself needs to be connected metaphorically and practically to other issues. For example, in a course in the History of Painting, the teacher could reverse the lecture and enlarge it by saying something like: "OK we've been studying early Renaissance Dutch painters. Now what makes them different from the Italian painters we were studying last week? And different from the ads we see in magazines today?" Or in a History

class "What three things could the Third Reich have done to win the war?" Anyon herself could have attempted this in her own essay by placing a series of open ended questions at the end "Are there any other levels of thinking besides these four?" "Are there instances where these levels don't apply?" "Can these four levels be applied to other areas, for example emotional or spiritual states, elements of physical perception, kinds of friendship?"

But all of these, obviously, are just ways of foregrounding the questions, and especially trying to foreground "critical questions" in a lecture environment, and while it would be easier to extend all these ideas into discussion classes and seminars and even into lab sections, it would not be fully valuable in itself if the teacher does not also address the substantial issue of student evaluation. Because what matters to the student is the test and for the most part tests in a collegiate setting are "rote" and "right" questions and "rote" and "right" answers. So if an instructor and an institution are serious about the Mission of critical thinking, then a piece of every exam needs to be an essay that is a response not only to an "expressive" but also to a "critical" question. Though perhaps a part of the student's grade could be a weekly written response to that week's "critical question", a journal of critical responses. Or for the tests and exams, perhaps the students should be encouraged to submit the questions themselves and the teacher could pick from those submissions and redistribute five of those questions and say that one of them will be on the exam. And if the teacher is really interested in building critical thinking, then it is important to let the students see essays which work compared to those which don't, and so when the tests are handed back the teacher might want to take three essays, an example of an A, C and F, take the names off and let the students have a copy and take some class time to discuss why they think they are graded that way. Another idea is to distribute 10 possible final exam essay questions in the first class, and let the students keep them in mind as the semester unfolds.

But obviously what is essential in all of this is to foreground the questions that support what we are really trying to accomplish in **each** class, and to have the students participate as fully as possible in the creation and selection of those questions. But as I turn now to my own classroom, let me first forewarn you of what I believe to be the most serious impediment to accomplishing this task of helping our students become genuine critical thinkers. It a race to reach home.

Caveat Emptor:

There is substantial evidence that students who can only do "rote" and "right" thinking, do flounder and fail when we try to get them to think expressively and critically. If you have been

driving on the right hand side of the road all your life, it is difficult to make that switch to the left when you rent that car in London. So let me return for a moment to Perry's stages and set up a microscopic lens though which we might better see what is going on with Jami & Fred, Ardelia, Tyrone & Celia, and Karen.

In her book, *Critical Thinking: Theory, Research, Practice, and Possibilities*, Joanne G. Kurfiss attempts to fuse William Perry's "Nine Stages of Intellectual Development" and Mary F. Belenky's corrections and emendations to Perry from her book *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* into a developmental whole comprised of four stages. Level 1 she describes as **"Dualism/received knowledge"** where students believe that "learning is simply a matter of acquiring information delivered by the professor in concert with the text. . . . [and] is either correct or it is not. . . . For these students, the concept of interpretation, essential to critical thinking, is puzzling" and many of these students will just opt to "keep quiet until [they] really know just what the answer is" (52-53). Level 2 is **"Multiplicity/subjective knowledge"** where because students perceive conflict in authorities, they "begin to develop trust in their 'inner voices' as a source of knowledge. . . . Students at this level recognize complexity but have not yet learned how to navigate its waters. They perceive no basis other than intuition, feeling, or 'common sense' on which to judge the merits" of the conflicting opinions of others (53-54). Level 3 is **"Relativism/procedural knowledge"** and here "students [begin] to realize that 'opinions' differ in quality. Good opinions are supported with *reasons*." Belenky calls this "connected knowledge" because the women in her study are deliberately attempting "to understand the reasons for another's way of thinking" and consequently are much more empathic than at level 2. By the way, for those who might believe that genuine "expressive" thinking doesn't begin until level 3, and "critical thinking" doesn't begin until level 4, it is probably disheartening to note that "Subsequent studies have found fewer than half of college seniors subscribing to this [level 3] epistemological perspective" (54-55). Level 4 is **"Commitment in relativism/constructed knowledge"** and here the students "include the *self* in their knowing process. . . . [and] are committed to nurturing rather than criticizing ideas; . . . [and] seek integrated, authentic lives that contribute to 'empowerment and improvement in the quality of life of others'" (55-56).

Now as Shermis says "before students can think reflectively, they must experience some degree of confusion, puzzlement, bewilderment, or disorientation" (30). But for those students who are mired in a level 1 epistemology, this confusion only makes them angry or silent, and while those who have fallen into the pit of level 2 will gladly voice their opinions, they may often not be able (for

prior epistemological reasons) to really listen to anyone else's opinions. So we can see that Jami's litany that "humans don't have any instincts" because her psychology teacher told her so, and Fred's concurrence because he read it in his psychology book are both, on the surface at least, indications of level 1 thinking, and it may be that even the most carefully crafted set of questions will never lead them out of the sludge they are mired in.

Equally Ardelia's justification of "the *fatwa*" because it supports her Islamic religious beliefs and Tyrone's sense that "Anybody should be able to say anything they want" are likely candidates for level 2 thinking, and it's possible that no amount of discussion is going to permit them to "hear" another viewpoint other than their own, and in fact Celia's personal question to Tyrone concerning why he slapped her for her words may be falling on deaf ears, although her ability to make the connection between the *fatwa* and her personal relationship and to do so with genuine feeling probably does indicate that she is capable of level 3 thinking. And to perhaps a lesser degree the same might be true of Karen's rejection of Tyrone's opinion with her examples of forbidding sex education to young kids in school, and her confused connection to the equality of evolution and creationism.

Mission Possible:

But OK, sludge and pits aside, let me return to my class. It's not going to go away, and there are still 29 minutes left. Let me see if I can honestly create for you a series of questions that would lead from their rote and right comments through the mode of expressive discourse to some genuine and lasting critical thoughts. Though it should be noted that one reason to sequence questions and put them ideally in sets of four is to enable each student to be a full participant in the class at their own epistemological level, and at the same time, the hierarchical arrangement of questions helps the students understand the four levels of thinking, questioning and valuing.

Jami & Fred:

Rote:	What is it that your teacher and the psychology book said exactly about instincts? And what are some examples of them?
Right:	How do psychology and biology define instincts?
Expressive:	Can anyone think of traits that we might, perhaps even incorrectly, identify as instinctual, in humans or in animals? And if we do not want to call these traits instincts, what do we want to call them?

Critical: What is the opposite of an instinct? And since Rushdie seems to be questioning the validity of a certain kind of fundamentalist faith, what are the differences between that faith and what Jami and Fred regard as instincts?

Ardelia & Tyrone:

Rote: Both Ardelia and Tyrone believe their opinions are right. What is an opinion?

Right: What are some differences between opinions and knowledge?

Expressive: Rushdie begins his novel with two men falling at 31,000 feet from an exploding aircraft, and surviving by singing and flapping their arms. Obviously that's his opinion. But in what ways is it a legitimate opinion, and in what ways is it not legitimate?

Critical: What is the *fatwa* against Rushdie an opinion about? In what ways are its underlining concerns legitimate? Rushdie talks a lot in the novel about what is unforgivable? What kinds of things do we find unforgivable, and why?

Karen:

Rote: Karen also disagrees with Tyrone's opinion. She thinks there are important objective rules of behavior that should apply to everyone, rules protecting children for instance, and rules about fairness in respecting different theories. In this respect she seems to agree with Ardelia when Ardelia believes that there is an objective rule about blasphemy. Still, is this a fair statement about Karen's position?

Right: Rushdie gives a number of examples where objectively the English and the Indians see a similar situation in very different ways. Can you describe some of those places in the novel?

Expressive: As a result of this perception Rushdie seems to believe that some or all of our objective rules for behavior are culturally conditioned, and that this is one of the difficulties of being an immigrant who can no longer feel at home in either culture. Is he right about this?

Critical: One distinguishing characteristic of the postmodern is precisely this opinion, that no position or perspective is privileged, that all belief is relative and finite, and that truth is created and does not exist outside of us. Do you believe this? And if this was "true", how is it different from Tyrone's original opinion?

Celia:

Rote: Celia said that Tyrone shouldn't have slapped her for speaking. What is it that Tyrone said that makes her believe that? And is she right that there is a discrepancy between Tyrone's opinion and his actions?

Right: Celia seems to believe that consistency is an important human characteristic. But Walt Whitman says: "Do I contradict myself?/Very well then I contradict myself,/(I am large, I contain multitudes)" (95). Can we identify in Rushdie places where consistency should be let go and where containing contradictions is harmful?

Expressive: How are we to resolve this problem?

Critical: And what are the connections between this problem and what makes people violent?

[Allie Allie Home Free:

Well, you've got to admit, almost any of these questions is probably a lot more interesting than what I was doing before I was interrupted by their damnfool notions. Still, it's time to end this game, close this class, set out for home. I told you at the beginning, my end is simple, and so it is, a simple koan:

The question is our mission: our mission is the question.

The only question is: Can we be upfront and outfront about each class's critical questions? Can we make critical thinking a daily habit for ourselves and for our students, because the truth is (as e e cummings says): "Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question" (332). Can we do it? That is the first question, though as Rushdie says, what **is** that "second question?" But I know, I know, I know the rules: Answer the first one first.

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THE IMAGE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: FACULTY PERCEPTIONS AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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THE IMAGE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: FACULTY PERCEPTIONS AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

> They are derided as college-light, embraced as a place for transcript damage control, and praised as a ladder into the middle class.... community colleges -- two year post secondary schools -- have boomed in the last thirty years....Changes in the economy and changes in the college experience have given community colleges vast populations to serve. Can they be all things to all people and remain a stepchild of American higher education?...Our perceptions of them are mixed. (Ray Suarez, "Talk of the Nation," National Public Radio, Aug. 17, 1995)

The genius of the community college is its open-access policy. The paradox of the community college is that its open-accessibility, its non-exclusive admissions policy, and its multitude of traditional and non-traditional course offerings also threaten to be its nemesis. Viewed by one segment of the community as a chance to achieve the American Dream, the community college is viewed by another segment as a stigmatized, second class institution - a college of last resort. And the stigma is often an impediment to those students seeking transfer to baccalaureate-granting colleges.

It has certainly been problematic for me for the past twenty-five years as a teacher in a transfer program. My frustration comes from the fact that this view is held most often by those who have never availed themselves of the opportunities the community college offers. Seeking to elevate the image of the community college, to remove the stigma or alleviate it, I sought possible solutions by looking within. I interviewed fifteen faculty colleagues representing the four academic divisions of the college to gather their perceptions about the college and about their roles as teachers. In addition, I interviewed four students of different ages, backgrounds, and programs of study. Their answers illuminated the pertinent issues, beginning with the image of the college, now and then.

> ***If you were an artist commissioned to paint your image of the community college <u>now</u>, what would your painting be like?***
>
> ***If you had done your painting during your first years of teaching (at the community college), would it have been the same or different from your painting now? If different, what influences resulted in the change?***

Although the paintings of the community college <u>now</u> varied in scale and type -- realistic, abstract, a mural, a mosaic, a collage -- each contained elements common to them all: students were <u>always</u> the primary (and in some cases the only) focus. They would be multi-cultural and diverse -- characters of all nationalities, races, ages, and handicaps.

If the professor were in the painting at all, s/he was always a secondary figure and would be portrayed as the catalyst, the guide, someone who "triggers a eureka reaction."

The setting was often outdoors: occasionally the buildings would be in the background. The outdoor setting could indicate the freedom, the options, the opportunities offered by the community college, or it could indicate an escape from the vagaries of the college's HVAC system.

Some of the paintings clearly were meant to be controversial: "the images would all come together in a way that might not please a lot of people, but would fairly realistically embody what a community college is all about. Sometimes it is beautiful; sometimes it's not. Sometimes it's hard to interpret; sometimes it's not. So that it's not going to be a picture that you are going to be able to look at and have different people come to a common agreement about what they are seeing." Here is the paradox in the form of a painting.

A few of the paintings depicted a kind of idealized image of the community college. "I imagine that we are part of whatever the university is historically about; we are about learning....There would be a small group of students and some thumbed-up hard books and notebooks in front of them. The setting is out in the yard doing something awfully traditional. My view of the community college is, if anything, becoming more old-fashioned."

The paintings from the first years of teaching (with one exception) depicted a more structured relationship between teacher and students, a more traditional classroom setting. They also revealed a bit of culture shock on the part of the teachers: many expected that the students would be better, more prepared, more interested in the content and issues circulating at the time. "My painting <u>then</u> would have been a one-dimensional realistic painting, not the collage-type thing that I now...view the community college as. It would be a one-dimensional painting where I saw things much more in black and white and not as in the many shades of gray as I now see. My expectations have changed. Unfortunately, I've become much more realistic."

Some of the <u>now</u> paintings addressed the current trend of thought regarding the delivery of education as a consumer/product/market model. "Courses cannot be packaged like soda cans, lined up on supermarket shelves and sold in six-packs to students....I'm really beginning to resist more and more the idea that students are consumers and that the college is some sort of large market place that's in competition with some other sellers of goods and that our courses are somehow products that we market to an unsuspecting consumer who pays for what he gets. I have to resist that model because I think it is destructive. I was probably more comfortable with it five years ago than I am now."

For some, the impact of technology played a significant role in the differences between the <u>then</u> and <u>now</u> paintings: "from an informational standpoint (in the library) maybe only 50% of what I do today is what I did in 1981. Now I work much more to make the students self-sufficient, using critical thinking, reasoning, logic to do their own searches using electronic means."

A sharper and more in-depth view of the college as a whole was delineated through responses to:

What one thing does the community college do the best?

If you could change <u>one</u> thing, what would it be?

The unanimous answer to the first question related directly to the open-access policy:

- it rescues lost souls
- it gives people a second and third and nth chance
- it's almost like a miracle worker at times -- dealing with the diverse student body
- it's a good place to start
- it offers hope that goes beyond the academic.

The advocacy and support of the open-access policy was immediate and unequivocal. "It is the college for people...who come here, somehow, 'damaged goods'...I think we succeed [with them] better than anybody....Sometimes what we are doing is getting them back upright and then showing them another path to take because the path they were on wasn't getting them where they wanted to go. So it's more about direction and about support, so that people can be what they were always able to be, but they couldn't do it on their own. In a sense, some people need to walk with crutches before they can learn to jog, and we're willing to let people have their time on the crutches."

The theme of nurturing, caring, supporting was dominant in all the interviews. It was the one, over-riding characteristic that distinguished the community college from other institutions of higher education in the minds of the interviewees:

- it develops self-esteem, self-confidence, a rounding-off and fine-tuning experience
- it gives people an opportunity to prove that they are/can be students
- it provides an atmosphere with lots of warm, personal attention -- a lot of nurturing.

By contrast to the unanimity of the responses to the first question, the second elicited answers that were as diverse as the interviewees themselves.

Three of the fifteen saw as primary the need to change the image of the college. The responses indicated that the change should occur in the way the college promotes and advertises itself: "We need to get the message out about how awesome the community college is." "We should advertise the college positively; the negative message comes, in part, from the high schools. "I've heard of [high school] counselors referring to the college as 'last ditch Mercer.'"

One interviewee felt that the negative image originates within the college. In his opinion there is a widespread feeling among faculty that they are somehow less than they could have been because they are teaching at a community college. "So that what we do best, we do almost under protest."

An improvement in the faculty/administration relationship emerged in two other responses for change. While one sought to establish a better working relationship between the two groups, the other felt that the administration should be more nurturing of the faculty. The latter attributed the less than adequate relationship between the administration and faculty to the different priorities held by each group.

The influence of technology on how and what we teach was another area of concern. Regarding how we teach, the perception was that the community college was heading in the direction of relying on, and to some extent replacing, human contact and human judgment with technology, and this was seen as an easy way out. Regarding what we teach, many responses described a general shift at the community college to offer skills courses to the exclusion of humanities (general education) areas of study. The perceptions were that what needs to be changed is "...the dangerous tendency to descend into anti-academic, anti-intellectual approaches; that is, that only technology matters. This is a total contradiction to critical thinking."

The concern for the way education is delivered, especially the consumer/product/market model, surfaced again several times in response to the question about what should be changed. "The idea of being providers of services in the same way as a supermarket -- that's a dangerous metaphor. That is regressing. But that's the desired direction -- that we should strive to offer courses twenty-four hours a day, condensing them ad absurdum,. because the people who are taking them are in a hurry to get where they want to go."

Other individual responses looked for the outcomes of change in the following areas:

- more training in how to reach our students
- reduced teaching loads ("so I can do more justice to my students")
- employment of more full-time faculty and less reliance on adjuncts to insure more stability and continuity in the programs
- new or better means to increase the bonding between the students and the community college (establish a sense of alma mater)
- reconfigured instructional spaces reflecting a seminar-type setting rather than the traditional hierarchical classroom
- reduced barriers to admission -- lowering admission costs and keeping charges at rock bottom.

Perhaps the most idealistic desired outcome was a societal change: "I would like to see a change in society (that I don't think is going to happen) reflected by the students at the community college and elsewhere that is more tolerant and more civil. I see the

breakdown in civility affecting our institutions -- in Congress, in the legal system, and in the classroom. We are getting to the point now where...we can't address certain issues -- about race, about politics -- because either people have the talk show mentality where they want to confront or they...pretend that there is no problem....How does that affect the community college? With the diverse group of students we have ethnically and academically, if we don't keep that open atmosphere...people are going to get into their own little worlds and look into their own little perspectives and their own self-interest areas, and...we are going to Vulcanize ourselves. At the community college where we have such diversity, that's the worst thing that could happen."

When interviewing the faculty about their image of the community college, it was important to have them reflect on their role as teachers. The mission of the community college gives rise to the kind of originality that is needed to succeed as a teacher. So, the mission and the teaching are one and the same -- they are integral parts of the one whole.

To discover and explore the ideal moments in teaching, I asked:

> ***What was your major/most significant/most memorable moment in teaching?***
>
> ***We've all had moments when "teaching works" -- when things have been as close to ideal as possible. What is going on when this happens...and...can you replicate it?***
>
> ***What do you see in other faculty as their most creative moments?***

For the majority of the faculty the most memorable moments were when there was unexpected enlightenment or a heightened motivation from the student(s) -- when they saw the light go on in someone's eyes. "Every once in a while...you look at the class and the class goes 'ah hah'! Just for a fleeting second it clicks. Click. You can almost hear the click. And the mask kind of falls away from them."

An almost equal number of responses referred to those moments when the faculty knew they had made a difference in someone's life. Whether it came in the form of a letter, a phone call, or a personal visit, the positive feedback was very gratifying. "Things happen incrementally that keep you going and make you know that you are making a difference. Having students tell you that you are making a difference keeps any negative feelings or cynicism from developing in one and taking over."

One respondent's major achievement was receiving the Distinguished Teaching Award. She felt it was probably the best thing that had ever happened to her and she could not believe it. "I'd worked so hard for so long and then somebody noticed one day!"

Perhaps the most moving response was the memory of this moment: "It was watching the visually-impaired student with whom I had worked so closely be chosen as commencement speaker and go up onto the stage to tell the whole graduation [audience]

what it was like for her at Mercer and how it was a dream come true for her because her parents didn't even want her to leave the house....She was dean's list -- she just excelled beyond anything she had dreamed of and she became the commencement speaker....That was my greatest moment, too, because...she asked me to accompany her to the stage."

When asked to recall the creative moments of other faculty, most of the interviewees referred to their own attempts as creativity in teaching. Perhaps this is due to the nature of teaching itself -- it's done in the privacy and isolation of one's own classroom. A faculty member rarely has the opportunity to observe or to be knowledgeable about another's experience. The few who were able to talk about the creative moments of others identified two major, contributing characteristics: supreme preparation and caring. They referred to the kind of preparation that is so thorough that it can accommodate and bolster improvisation in the classroom. It can be a trigger for success; the more you prepare, the more effortless it appears. "Their most creative moments are when they put aside the curriculum and what they have planned for the day, and just have to go off on a tangent because a student has demonstrated some extraordinary interest in a subject or a point and the rest of the class also needs that. Creativity on your feet...improvisation."

They also spoke of "artistically spiritual" colleagues whose caring ignites enthusiasm and releases latent talents in the students. "They have such an enthusiasm and such an attachment to their students that they get [them] to do extraordinary things....Teaching is an art form. It is both emotionally stimulating and emotionally draining....It is improvisation all the time. You have to get into a mode, almost, and then all of a sudden you become creative in the act of teaching. It is not something that can be planned with a course outline."

The consensus was that the creative teaching mix included both ingredients: "You have to love people and you have to believe that your discipline has significance and life and importance. Creative moments are when you see [teachers expressing] passion for their discipline, not only caring for the student." It is a given that teaching is an art, not a science, and therefore, it is very difficult to replicate the ideal moments. One can strive to replicate them and there are triggers to do this. Implicit in every response was the belief that the major trigger is to demystify the classroom, to remove whatever anxiety there is and to encourage questions. An accepting atmosphere will be one of the most important triggers. "If you have good rapport with your students, if they don't feel that they will be belittled or ridiculed, that there isn't even an unspoken 'oh well, what can you expect with him or her'" -- that is the ideal.

Teaching and learning is a duet between the instructor and the students. It is a mutually-reciprocal experience the success of which is difficult to attribute. This is especially true in the community college classroom which presents the ultimate challenge to the teacher. Working with an extremely diverse group of students fosters, by necessity, the development of numerous adaptive teaching skills and strategies, especially since many community college teachers have little (if any) training in how to teach. The responses to:

> ***In all of your teaching, what one thing do you really like doing?***
>
> ***Do you have a special strategy/device/method/technique that works very, very well for you?***

revealed more than teaching strategies. Underlying emotional elements, concomitants of the teaching/learning experience, also emerged.

Three modes of teaching were preferred: the classroom setting, one-on-one with students, and the lecturing format. It was interesting to note the correlation of preferred mode and academic discipline. Faculty who most preferred the classroom situation taught English, foreign languages, psychology, and law. "I like the actual teaching in the classroom itself because there's a dynamic there and you never know what to expect. Every day is different." "It's the students being willing to stretch themselves, to look beyond the surface, when they are willing to speculate." The one-on-one setting was preferred by faculty in basic skills and counseling. "I like when I sit down with one student and we really hammer something out, and we both agree that something has happened." Faculty from engineering, science, and computer science preferred the lecture format. "I like some aspects of lecturing -- that satisfies the ham in all of us." "I like getting in front of a class of fifteen to twenty-five people and trying to lead them through [the material] and getting them to see things....There's a performance aspect to it. It's ego-gratification."

It was not surprising that the respondents' favorite teaching strategies and/or techniques would be numerous and varied. Humor was cited most often as the device that works particularly well as an antidote to apathy, unresponsiveness and lack of motivation. It was regarded as a foolproof technique. Several of the faculty, particularly in the liberal arts, used collaborative learning techniques with good results. "It's an ideal technique for ESL and foreign language classes. In language classes it's very hard to give everyone the opportunity to speak very much if you work together as a [single] group. In [individual] groups they are able to practice a lot more. They read to each other, they dictate to each other, and they ask questions of each other [in order] to practice enough verbally."

The need to keep the subject fresh, new and interesting, not only for the students but the teachers as well, led many of them to try strategies that involved changes each semester, even though the result often meant more work for themselves. "Every semester I teach every course differently. I'm always making new things. Always being prepared, no matter what. I hate the thought of [being] unprepared, and I like to have something new. It has to be fresh -- finding new readings, new exercises, new topics." "To keep it lively

for me, too, I keep changing the textbooks, I keep changing courses....Because when you teach [four sections of] two English courses, at thirty students per class, 120 writing students each semester, it's a great way to die!"

Various other preferred techniques/strategies that proved to be effective included:

- taking sincere personal interest in each student
- keeping an open mind about the outside pressures affecting some students
- creating a new way to teach French with music (French aerobics)
- ensuring a non-threatening classroom environment
- providing support, praise, caring, and high expectations.

The challenges, of course, are many. Consequently, replies to the questions:

What is the biggest challenge you face as a teacher?
How do you respond to it?

were greatly varied. One third of the interviewees, all of whom in this instance teach in the liberal arts, responded that their greatest challenge was the non-responsive class, the students who simply don't respond. One of these teachers said it this way: "The biggest challenge I face as a teacher is 'the nothing.' In the movie 'The Never Ending Story,' there is a monster that is taking over. A monstrous, dark cloud is rolling in and taking over all of life and all people and creatures -- and it's called 'the nothing.' It's a kind of pollution that invades your system so that you become so depressed and unmotivated that you don't want to do anything and you don't have any interest in anything. And 'the nothing' is destroying the earth. My biggest challenge as a teacher is to walk into a classroom where a lot of people have already become infected with 'the nothing.'"

How do they respond to 'the nothing' class or student? "I simply don't know what to do with them. I'm utterly bewildered when they don't respond. And there always are some." "How I respond is not very nice. I become very angry, very angry with them and myself....Well, they've spent their money [for the course]. They've bought a product..... These are people who don't want to learn. They just want a grade. And sometimes you get in their way." "I try to show my students that what you can learn in college is to think and that [the humanities] are a training ground for thinking and reaching informed conclusions, speculating, being able to analyze a situation and take all the parts and synthesize them."

Three other faculty (from technical areas and mathematics) voiced their frustration in getting even some of the responsive students to learn. "Teaching is easy, but getting someone to learn is hard." "You just work hard and accept the fact that you can't get everybody through."

The challenge of impending burnout affected faculty in all disciplines. They found it difficult to maintain their own enthusiasm and keep the subject fresh for the new student.

One said simply, "I'm getting old as a teacher and I'm reaching the point where, frankly, I'm tired of grading papers. I've had it!"

Other challenges emerged as faculty attempted to meet all the needs of their diverse student populations. One teacher's response: "I try to deal with each student as if s/he were my own child. When a student walks into my office, I [ask myself] if this were my son or daughter, what would I be doing to give him/her the same kind of advice and nurturing that I gave my own kids that obviously succeeded with them?"

There were no quick-fix solutions, just the sense that the faculty would try anything to meet and master the challenges.

The two last questions of the interview asked the faculty to envision their utopian view of the community college ten years hence -- a "best of all possible worlds" scenario, and also, to speculate about what would happen if the community college simply did not exist.

What is your ideal vision of the community college ten years from now?
Do you think it is possible?
What has to happen to make your ideal of the future a reality?

If the community college did not exist, would it matter?

It is not surprising that the faculty's ideal image for the future would focus primarily on new, expanded types of instruction and the new ways they would be delivered:

- greatly expanded, greatly reinforced, greatly enriched general education so that every graduate has a rich experience in general education

- more teaching done by full-time instructors instead of so much reliance on part-time people, thereby providing more continuity and stability at a time when students, courses, and programs are apt to change quickly

- a variety of configurations for scheduling courses, year-round course offerings, and all types of instruction offered in different ways in response to ever more non-traditional students and their diverse lifestyles and time schedules

- more trained professionals to deal with the increasing needs of people of many cultures and students with disabilities

- more liaisons with industry and the working community to meet special training and re-training needs

- extensive use of electronic technology to the extent that it will profoundly alter the way learning occurs.

With regard to this last, one respondent predicted: "Almost one hundred per cent of teaching [will be done] with computers and/or electronic technology." When asked how one reconciles the joys of face-to-face teaching, when "the light goes on," with this ideal image of a future when students learn solely by interacting with machines, he replied, "We'll probably have to give up the joy of teaching that way. We'll have to get the satisfaction a different way. We'll have to find satisfaction in [the fact] that the system has worked as it should and that more people are learning better, more efficiently than [in the] old-fashioned system." How does one quantify that? "Damned if I know! Teacher satisfaction is going to be second hand. If this world comes about, the whole approach to teaching will be different. Although, looking back through history, it probably won't be. After all, once the textbook was invented, in principle we didn't need lectures. But we still fill lecture halls. We'll probably have elements of all aspects [of teaching]."

Stated simply, the community college of the future was envisioned to be what it always has been -- all things to all people -- but on a vastly expanded scale.

For about a third of the interviewees, however, the optimistic and utopian image of their ideal was offset by a pessimistic and dystopian view of a society that could prevent it from happening. As one respondent put it: "I wish I were more optimistic about the community college and higher education in general. The downsizing of government and [the attitude that] the government is the enemy and teachers are overpaid and so forth -- that whole mind set is going to take its toll. I think the community colleges are going to suffer because of lack of funding. We are going to be so budget-conscious, that we are going to make some bad decisions. We are not going to replace people who need to be replaced; we are going to overly-rely on adjuncts where we shouldn't, even though they often do very good jobs. There is a trend to do whatever you can to make the budgetary requirements that are needed. It is going to take its toll. We are seeing it right now....I just see a mean-spiritedness in society and government that...affects education because... educators are really part of the government process in that we get our funding from the government....We are not going to be able to continue with the quality that we've been able to maintain...because the money isn't going to be there."

Another interviewee said it this way: "I would like the attitude toward education to improve, and I think that it can improve if society in general begins valuing teachers once again. This also affects how knowledge is received because it takes a great deal of maturity and a real thirst for knowledge to bypass the niceties of respect and to respect a person for what s/he knows rather than what society thinks about them or says about them."

Would it matter if the community college did not exist? ABSOLUTELY! There was no dissenting opinion there. Our society has become so dependent on it, it has made such an impact in its thirty-plus years, that if it did not exist there would be a huge void in our system of higher education that would not or could not be completely filled by other institutions. "We would become much more of an elitist society, because this is the place

where the non-traditional has an opportunity to buy into the American Dream. America would not be able to exist in the fashion that it does at present. We would not be able to offer an opportunity to a large segment of our populace if we didn't have the community college. They would not have a route to go. The consequences would be absolutely devastating." The community college system, for all its idiosyncrasies, is really the animus that keeps the American Dream alive for a large number of people.

CONCLUSIONS

When I began my research for this paper, the interviews with faculty and students, I did so in the hope that I would find answers or clues to the causes of what I perceived to be a stigmatized or negative image of the community college. The research proved fruitful and several issues emerged that suggest possible solutions or, at the very least, ways to ameliorate the negative image.

First, it is important to acknowledge that the community college is held in very high regard by the vast majority of the population it serves. As I wrote at the outset, the negative view is held most often (but not exclusively) by those who are unfamiliar with or have never availed themselves of the extraordinary range of opportunities the community college offers. Fortunately, this group is in the minority.

The interviews revealed several sources for the negative image:

- It is tied in with being the "home town school," with living at home and commuting, and thereby denying the freedom, sophistication, and prestige associated with going away to a residential school.

- It is easy to get into. Because its open-access policy is often the initial predominant feature of the community college, people tend to forget or ignore the fact that its programs are rigorous and it is hard to get out of; ie. easy grades and graduation are not givens.

- The negative image has been known to be perpetuated by some high school guidance counselors.

- And, some community college teachers themselves are guilty of the same attitude and transmit it, consciously or unconsciously, to their students.

- There tends to be little, if any, sense of alma mater. Graduates tend to maintain ties and closer affiliations with their academic disciplines than with the college as a whole.

- And last, community colleges are relatively new. They have been in existence for a little over thirty years which, in the collegiate world, is not a long time to develop and establish a sense of history and tradition.

This list suggests three areas of the community college where more could be done to elevate its image: marketing, alumni relations and professional development.

Mercer County College already does a very good job in its publicizing efforts. In fact, two of the students interviewed said that advertising is what the college does the best. The school keeps the county residents up-to-date on course offerings, events on campus, and other college-related activities. But as one of the student interviewees, a senior citizen who is president of his own company, pointed out, advertising is not marketing. As he explained, marketing encompasses a lot more than just advertising. In his own company, which specializes in custom home building and renovations, many of his clients hear of him by word of mouth or referrals, but they hire him because of his proven record of excellent work. His successes are his satisfied clients, and he markets his company through the promotion of the work he has done for them.

His comments point up the difference between presentation and promotion. The college already does a very good job in presenting itself. But one of its best promotional vehicles is WWFM, the college's public radio station. Another is the college theatre.

In recent years, Mercer has highlighted the success stories of several graduates. While this is a good beginning, much more could be done in this area to promote the college (and elevate its image). If one way to measure the worth of a college is by the success of its alumni, then Mercer has an excellent opportunity to promote itself through its best resource, its countless successful graduates.

The interviews also pointed out the need for a strong alumni association. The college needs to find out in some energetic, systematic way, who those people are who are proud that they went to Mercer and let their pride invoke the pride of others. Every member of the faculty can identify former students who still keep in touch with them and who value their Mercer experience. Perhaps this is where the project could begin, because students tend to have ties to people in their specific programs of study, not to the college as a whole. Alumni have proved to be valuable members of the college advisory commissions and excellent resources for adjunct faculty. There could very well be a strong correlation between the successful development of a vigorous alumni association and the elevation of the image of the college.

Professional development programs for faculty are invaluable in providing opportunities for re-energizing one's professional spirit, for healing the effects of burnout, and generally refreshing one's outlook in teaching. One interviewee estimated that perhaps half of the faculty at a community college are burdened by a feeling that they are less than they could be because they are doomed to teach under-prepared, under-motivated students (reference "the nothing.") If the faculty's own sense of themselves is negative, it is unlikely that they can uplift their students' sense of themselves, and yet that is precisely what many community college students look for and need. Professional development opportunities such as sabbaticals and release time for conferences and

special projects may not alleviate entirely the professional miasma, but they certainly go a long way toward lessening the symptoms. This paper itself is the result of my year-long involvement in the Mid-Career Fellowship Program at Princeton University, and I can attest to the enriching and rejuvenating effect that experience has had on me.

In the final analysis, the major element implicit in all of the interviews was the validation of the greatness of the community college idea. More than any other institution of higher education, the community college has the flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness that make it possible to offer even more outstanding educational opportunities in the years to come. If our society allows this to happen, we may find that the non-traditional of today will become the traditional of tomorrow.

FACULTY INTERVIEWED

Dr. Andrew W. Conrad
Dean of Liberal Arts

Professor Noreen L. Duncan
English/Communications

Dr. Vera H. Goodkin
French/English

Professor Peter J. Holsberg
Engineering/Computer Science

Susanne Kotch
Counseling/Basic Skills

Professor Jerry Kuhl
Aviation

Professor Melvin D. Leipzig
Painting/Art History

Dr. Regina A. Mezei
English as a Second Language

Professor Judith W. Nygard
English

Professor Pamela A. Price
Director of Library Services

Professor James F. Rowe
Legal Studies

Professor Arthur E. Schwartz
Mathematics

Dr. Dori Seider
Education/Psychology

Dr. Frank B. Slezak
Chemistry

Dr. June B. Valley
English

STUDENTS INTERVIEWED

Mary Banfield
Social Science

Courtney Mansell
Social Science

Carolyn Marfino
Biology

Harry Williams
Architecture

THE FACULTY INTERVIEW

The interviewing technique was based on the principles of naturalistic inquiry which attempts to present "slice of life" episodes documented through natural language and to represent as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, how they know it, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are. In-person interviews are the typical N/I data collection method.

The following questions were presented in sequence, one at a time, to focus the respondent's thoughts on each one.

1. If you were an artist commissioned to paint your image of the community college now, what would your painting be like?

2. If you had done your painting during your first years of teaching (at the community college), would it have been the same or different from you painting now? If different, what influences resulted in the change?

3. What one thing does the community college do the best?

4. If you could change one thing, what would it be?

5. What was your major/most significant/most memorable moment in teaching?

6. We've all had moments when "teaching works" -- when things have been as close to ideal as possible. What is going on when this happens...and...can you replicate it?

7. What do you see in other faculty as their most creative moments?

8. In all of your teaching, what one thing do you really like doing?

9. Do you have a special strategy/device/method/technique/etc. that works very, very well for you?

10. What is the biggest challenge you face as a teacher? How do you respond to it?

11. What is your ideal vision of the community college ten years from now? Do you think it is possible? What has to happen to make your ideal of the future a reality?

12. If the community college did not exist, would it matter?

THE STUDENT INTERVIEW

The following questions were presented in sequence, one at a time, to focus the respondent's thoughts on each. The interviewing technique was the same as the faculty interview.

1. If you were an artist commissioned to paint your image of the community college now, what would your painting be like?

2. If you had done your painting during your first semester at the community college, would it have been the same or different from your painting now? If different, what influences resulted in the change?

3. What one thing does the community college do the best?

4. If you could change one thing about the community college, what would it be?

5. What is your major/most significant/most memorable moment as a student at the community college?

6. We've all had moments when the light of understanding suddenly goes on -- when what we've been studying or trying to learn all just clicks. Can you identify what is going on for you when this happens...and...can you repeat it?

7. What do you see in your teachers as their most creative moments? What do you see in other students as their most creative moments?

8. Considering the various methods/techniques/approaches that the faculty use in their teaching, what one works the best for you?

9. Do you have a special strategy/device/method/technique of studying that works very, very well for you?

10. What is the biggest challenge you face as a student? How do you respond to it?

11. What is your ideal vision of the community college ten years from now? Do you think it is possible? What has to happen to make you ideal of the future a reality?

12. If the community college did not exist, would it matter?

Robert Freud HIS 520

Community Colleges and the Virtual Community

> "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Arthur C. Clarke's Third Law from *Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible*

Maria checks her e-mail before leaving for class. She finds three different responses from members of her study group to her question about last night's calculus problem as well as an invitation to coffee from a friend and a missive from her French teacher, M. Atget. The message asks if she can stop by during an office hour this week to discuss her most recent test on the *Pasée Composé*. The cup of coffee in the student center is real; the office hour is virtual--Maria attends a community college in New Jersey, and her French teacher is located in Paris.

Today, college professors in some virtual courses meet their students rarely or not at all as an increasing number of schools offer credit and noncredit courses over the Internet. In Manhattan, for example, the New School offers both Business Chinese and Astronomy on-line. At present, electronic courses offered by the New School are text-based: The instructors' lecture notes are posted (made available on the Internet), students complete assignments by e-mail, and a "virtual" classroom bulletin board exists for discussion. At the other end of the spectrum, the University of Toronto offers a course called Creativity, whose students can attend the course in Toronto or from another location, via the In-

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ternet. All of the instructor's lectures can be heard over the Internet with a home computer connected to a modem.

A recent Internet educational project focused on an Egyptian archaeological excavation. Although the course was geared for primary and secondary school students, it was technologically more impressive than the college courses mentioned above. Week by week, results of the expedition and photographs of new finds were posted on the Internet. Using e-mail, students wrote questions to the scientists participating in the dig. An interview by a scientist of a Bedouin family was posted on-line. On this dig, an important and unexpected discovery of a new set of burial chambers was immediately shared with the participating Internet students.

In addition to the educational advantages, knowledge of the Internet is desirable for job seekers. In a recent survey of 150 executives of top companies conducted by Robert Half International, 61 percent of those questioned indicated that Internet savvy would make an individual a more desirable candidate for employment; 76 percent of the respondents thought that knowing how to use the Internet would be important for career advancement in another five years.[1] Yet fewer than half of the community colleges in the United States have a presence on the Internet. My purpose in this paper is to suggest that community colleges should consider the advantages to students, faculty, and nonteaching staff of Internet access. These advantages include but are not limited to the vast number of on-line resources available in most subject areas. The public awareness and acceptance of the Internet that has occurred during the 1990s points to important changes in the way information will be disseminated in the near future, to changes in education, and to important cultural changes as well.

Background on the Internet: What Is It?

The Internet today connects more than 30 million users around the world. As its name implies, the Internet is a network of computer networks. A good analogy may be that of telephone service: A caller in North Carolina whose phone service is provided by Southern Bell can talk with someone in New York whose service is offered through NYNEX. In the same way, people who have Internet accounts on one network can send messages to and retrieve files from users on other networks around the world, regardless of the type of computer operating system being used. As is the case with the telephone analogy, such integration is "seamless" in that users need not be aware of the technology in order to make use of it.

The origins of the Internet date back to a U.S. government project called the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), developed in 1969 to create an emergency computer network in the event that an act of war, for example, shut down traditional lines of communication. However, it was the advent of an easy-to-use graphical user interface (GUI) in 1993 known as Mosaic that enabled many people to use the Internet without having to learn the UNIX operating system, which previously was necessary for most Internet applications.

Today the World Wide Web has become synonymous in the minds of most people with the Internet. The World Wide Web (WWW) is a set of software tools that allows users to access hypertext-linked information. Under the hypertext system, information is linked so as to enable the user/reader, rather than the author/creator, to determine the path through the information. (The help system in Windows-based computers is

a hypertext system familiar to many people who use the Windows operating system.) The idea of hypertext is similar to that of "interactive" children's books which encourage the child to read a section of the story and then decide what happens next.

Distance Learning: Benefits of Multimedia Hypertext

Those readers who have not themselves used the World Wide Web will be at a disadvantage for what follows. But let me state that the Internet as accessed via the WWW has many advantages over the video or audio courses that many people associate with distance learning. When well designed, educational materials delivered over the Internet *are* interactive: The student receives feedback and has the ability to ask questions as well as to control the speed of the delivery of the material. For those courses that are recorded and delivered using a combination of text, audio, and video, a significant portion of this interaction today comes about in the form of e-mail. Students may post questions to the instructor, to other students, and to people around the world who are in some way involved with the topic being studied. One of the most powerful educational benefits of the Internet is its ability to integrate audio, video, text, graphics, and interactive elements in one lesson. Students studying art history, for example, may visit a museum on-line, see high-quality scanned images of paintings, listen to a lecture, watch a video, ask questions of an instructor or docent, and discuss with one another what they are viewing and studying. Making use of *shared white board* technology can enable learners to collaborate in real time on a drawing or jointly to evaluate an article. Discussions in which participants may

see one another are possible, although at present the available technology is primitive compared with the standards of broadcast television.

Today very few people are untouched by the Internet and the Web, and this is likely to become even more true in the near future. Even those who do not use a computer are likely to benefit from Internet technology. A client who contacts a real estate agent for listings in another state, for example, will probably be presented with a customized list and perhaps photographs downloaded from the Net. A patient may receive treatment based on information a doctor sought and found while searching the Net. Stockbrokers use the Net not only to check quotes but also to conduct video conferences to discuss emerging issues relevant to their clients' portfolios.

Although it might appear that the Internet is merely the mood ring of the 199Cs, important evidence supports the idea that it will be a leading player in the immediate future and probably for much longer. One of the best indicators of this is the fact that new computers are now being sold with pre-installed Internet software and hardware. Several computer companies (Microsoft, for example) have even developed their own networks (MSN, the Microsoft Network). Additional evidence is the competitive pricing being offered for Internet access ($15-$20 per month for unlimited home Internet access). There is also an incentive for hardware companies to develop low-end workstations that can connect to the Internet those families or businesses that want access to the Net for information but do not need computing power.

Although it is difficult to determine precisely when the general public became aware of and "accepted" the Internet, certainly the Internet is no longer, as it once was, the exclusive tool of computer science de-

partments in four-year colleges. Not only is it accessible to the general public, but it has become the current darling/devil of the mass media and has spawned among other things a tremendous publishing initiative in books to teach people how to use this tool.

Community College Access to the Internet

Community colleges have certainly not avoided computer technology. A study conducted by the Technology, Teaching and Scholarship Project at the University of Southern California revealed that community colleges make use of computers in nearly twice as many courses as do four-year institutions.[2] Yet community colleges today vary widely in their use of the Internet and in the access they provide to faculty, students, and staff. Many schools provide merely limited access, and this only for faculty. According to statistics from the American Association of Community Colleges, the United States has 1,100 junior and community colleges.[3] Of these, it is estimated, fewer than half have a presence on the World Wide Web.[4] Schools that do not have a public Web server may, however, provide varying levels of Internet access to their faculty, staff, and students. Typically some schools may provide their faculty with e-mail capabilities but not with the ability to access WWW pages or construct and post their own pages.

How the Internet Can Benefit Community Colleges

Schools in general, and community colleges in particular, can derive many benefits from making Internet access available to their publics. Of perennial importance, of course, are economic questions. The Internet has the potential to encourage significant cost savings and the poten-

tial to generate new revenue sources. As schools find ways to collaborate using the Internet, they can share resources efficiently. Where educationally sound, the judicious use of distance learning may enable schools to stretch limited budgets by reaching students with courses that go beyond the interactive television (ITV) of today. Schools will thus realize a savings in terms of physical resources, instructional resources, or both.

Enhancing Public Relations for Community Colleges

Far more than other institutions of higher learning, community colleges are dependent upon public perception, and this public perception translates very directly into funding. This dependence also affects the number of students who enroll. Given that newspapers are disinclined to publish anything that is not hard news, a community college's World Wide Web site can be a highly effective way to reach the public. In order to use the Net this way, a computer-literate public must be attracted to a school's host site on a continuing basis. As many Web designers have discovered, the site must provide more than a well-designed advertisement. Users must receive true value of some sort; they must be intrigued enough to resist immediately jumping to another link somewhere else in cyberspace. An often-quoted dictum for potential Web authors is that on the Internet, at least, "content is king."

Internet and Recruitment

E-mail accounts and Internet access have been standard benefits provided to students studying at four-year institutions for most of the 1990s. Now students trying to decide which college to enroll in might

decline to consider those that do not provide such Internet access; indeed, they may in fact take level of Internet access--if any--into their decision-making process. Students interested in attending Mercer Community College, for example, can click on a WWW link to receive information about the school. Students interested in a particular department can access another link to have someone from that department contact them by phone or e-mail with more information about the area they are interested in studying.

Faculty Development

Although reduced educational funding makes conference attendance prohibitively expensive for many community college faculty because of travel costs, participation in virtual sharing is free or inexpensive. At community colleges, a teacher may find her/himself one of a very few people who share a given academic discipline. Because of heavy teaching loads, some teachers find it burdensome to keep up to date in their fields. With Internet access, teachers can enter into subject-area discussions from their home or office computers and can peruse many of the latest journals on-line. Software appropriate for their discipline often is made available free of charge over the Internet. Many professional organizations, such as the American Philosophical Association and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, host WWW sites with links of interest to their members. The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages has been particularly active on the Internet. A daily e-mail discussion group for these teachers is one of the ten most widely subscribed of such groups, with more than 10,000 people registered. Though community college libraries may be reluctant to subscribe to cer-

tain professional journals that will be read by a very limited number of faculty, free electronic versions of many professional publications are becoming more and more the norm.

Teaching Critical Thinking

> "I believe that it is a myth that the more choices you have, the more appropriate actions you can take and the more freedom you will enjoy. Rather, more choices seem to produce more anxiety. . . . I have a theory that this is why Chinese food is always shared among diners. To somewhat reduce the anxiety of having to make a decision from so many choices, diners have access to everyone else's selection, to make a poor choice less distasteful." Richard Saul Wurman, *Information Anxiety*

The resources of the Internet are vast and impressive--and without any kind of central organization. It is easy to find information on almost any topic, but students must use critical thinking to evaluate the information they find. For example, there is likely to be a difference in accuracy and quality between information gleaned from a discussion on the alt.religions newsgroup (an open forum on all aspects of religion) and that from, say, the Dartmouth University Glossary of World Religions.

The resources of the Internet are different from those of libraries in that library collections have been well indexed by professionals. While the Internet has given everyone and anyone the equivalent of a printing press, enabling them to disseminate information on-line, the search engines (software programs designed for searching databases) have

yet to catch up with the information outpouring. For example, a search of AltaVista, one of the most popular search engines, turns up more than one million references to teaching. If I ask for information on "Internet," more than eight million references are located in seconds. Performing a Boolean search for "Internet" and "teaching" narrows the number to a more manageable 700,000. The key word "China" brings up 200,000 potential leads. The key word "biology" brings up approximately 400,000 hits. Asking for references to the Arthur C. Clarke quote that heads this paper brings up more than 200 hits. Students will now need instruction both in reference techniques applicable to this new medium and in evaluating materials for relevance, authority, and applicability.

At a recent technology conference, the person responsible for designing the catalog for one of the five most popular search engines said that her company indexed only the title headings and first few paragraphs of Web pages that are included in their database. Given that the first paragraphs of many documents are often not descriptive of what follows, the number of "false" hits one will encounter when using such a search engine is great. Some have said that the task of librarians in the past was to help patrons find information; in the age of the Internet, their task is to help patrons avoid irrelevant information and to keep users from drowning in the sea of possible references.

Cultural Change

Foreign language teachers are often encouraged to study a new language every few years, if for no other reason than to help them empathize with the task facing their students. One might view the educational process as being composed of two distinct camps: those who know

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(the teachers) and those who don't know (the learners). It is easy for those who know to forget how frustrating and difficult learning can be. This is not to suggest that the nature of the educational endeavor is intrinsically adversarial; however, introduction of the new technologies may provide some leveling of the emotional playing field ordinarily found in the classroom.

With the migration of important educational resources to the Internet, students and teachers are on the same footing with regard to the new technology. Few know this new technology completely. Almost everyone is disenfranchised as a novice computer user. Even those who know how to word process and send e-mail must go through a learning process when facing the Internet. New vocabulary (URL, http, anonymous ftp) and new concepts (hypertext, Boolean search, web-browser plug-in) confront most users initially. It is reasonable to assume that many teachers who are presently working and all new teachers will need to embrace the emerging technologies. All teachers will realize a valuable benefit if they remember their initial frustrations and difficulties with the Internet and are able to preserve a measure of empathy for what their students go through on a daily basis.

Drawbacks of the Internet

In addition to concerns that students will spend all their time on the Internet aimlessly "surfing" or playing worldwide multi-user games of "Doom," many teachers have expressed concern that the ability of students to download massive amounts of text that may be easily imported into word processing documents may unduly tempt those who see deadlines approaching. The detection of such plagiaristic efforts is, in fact,

easier when students use material "lifted" from electronic sources. Teachers have always looked for differences in writing style. Many instructors can relate stories of having seen papers in which an initially clumsy introductory paragraph is followed by three well-written pages and then summed up by an equally awkward conclusion. If one suspects that material has been copied from an electronic source, it might be that the student whose paper is being questioned used one of the standard search engines to locate that material and used it verbatim. Using a search engine like AltaVista (which, unlike the unnamed service mentioned previously, indexes every word of every document available through it), one merely enters a suspect phrase or sentence. If it appears in a document indexed by AltaVista, the entire article will instantly be available, saving a teacher much effort trying to track down possible sources of plagiarism.

Also of concern is the fact that although the Internet offers means for generating additional revenue and maximizing use of scarce resources, users, in order to access the Internet via a browser such as Netscape or Mosaic, will need access to higher-end computers than are often generally available at many community colleges. While computers with 386 processors and 4 megabytes of RAM may be fine for word processing and working with spreadsheets, 486 machines with at least 8 megs of RAM are really a minimum recommendation for WWW users. Upgrading to these machines will be an expense over and above the cost of securing an Internet connection.

Encouraging Student-Teacher Communication

The experience of many community college faculty is that students are reluctant to partake of office hours unless specially urged to do so or until they discover that they are failing their courses. The two-way communication provided by an e-mail system changes the nature of the student-teacher dialogue. Students with questions post them to their teachers, to study groups, or to a UseNet newsgroup (UseNet newsgroups are the 10,000 to 15,000 e-mail discussion groups hosted on the Internet on nearly every topic imaginable). Students may contact the instructor of a class they are considering taking to find out more about the class; they may also check the previous semester's online syllabus, course guide, and practice tests if these have been posted on-line as many professors are now doing. Some faculty may encourage students to submit first drafts of important assignments by e-mail and then return these with voice or text annotations.

Encouraging Community at Community Colleges

It is ironic that one of the things often missing at many community colleges is a true sense of community among the students. No one is at fault; almost all such schools function on a commuter basis. Providing students with access to e-mail and Internet accounts that they will want to check frequently may have the potential to help establish some sense of community. At Gainesville College, for example, in order to check their e-mail students must pass through an electronic bulletin board upon which appear notices of current interest: sporting activities, plays, trips, concerts, and the like. Although students may ignore these

as easily as we ignore television advertisements (or do we?), well-designed, graphically interesting notices will attract students' notice and, perhaps, encourage them to participate in activities that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Without minimizing the very real technological, financial, and educational concerns about making Internet access available to community college students, faculty, and staff, the potential benefits appear to outweigh the drawbacks.

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INTERDISCIPLINARY CLASSES

Mid-Career Fellowship Program

Princeton University

Freda Hepner

Brookdale Community College

Lincroft, N.J.

May, 1996

The idea that knowledge of all sorts should be synthesized and integrated for better understanding probably started with Plato who described philosophy as a "unified" science. Perhaps, as a foreshadowing of the debates that were to come, Aristotle disagreed with that notion and proposed a "logical" method of thinking and learning. From these auspicious beginnings, the discussion has continued and scholars slowly struggle to establish some common ground for "unity" and/or "logic" in learning and teaching. However it is addressed, we know that interdisciplinary or "holistically unified" classes provide students with opportunities to solve problems and address questions more creatively than single disciplined classes do.

Lawrence Wheeler, an educational planner tells a tale.

Once upon a time a planning group was formed to design a house for an elephant. On the committee were an architect, an interior designer, an engineer, a sociologist and a psychologist. The elephant was highly educated too...but he was not on the committee.

The five professionals met and elected the architect as their chairman. His firm was paying the engineer's salary, and the consulting fees of the other experts, which, of course, made him the natural leader of the group.

At their fourth meeting they agreed it was time to get at the essentials of their problem. The architect asked just two things: "How much money can the elephant spend?" and "What does the site look like?"

The engineer said that precast concrete was the ideal material for elephant houses, especially as his firm had a new computer just begging for a stress problem to run.

The psychologist and the sociologist whispered together and then one of them said, "How many elephants are going to live in this house?"...It turned out that one elephant was a psychological problem, but two or more were a sociological matter. The group finally agreed that though one elephant was buying the house, he might eventually marry and raise a family. Each consultant could, therefore, take a legitimate interest in the problem.

The interior designer asked, "What do elephants do when they're home?"

"They lean against things," said the engineer. We'll need strong walls."

"They eat a lot," said the psychologist. "You'll want a big dining room...and they like the color green."

"As a sociological matter," said the sociologist, "I can tell you that they mate standing up. You'll need high ceilings."

So they built the elephant his house. It had precast concrete walls, high ceilings, and a large dining area. It was painted green to remind him of the jungle. And it was completed for only 15% over the original estimate.

The elephant moved in. He always ate outdoors, so he used the dining room for a library...but it wasn't very cozy.

He never leaned against anything, because he had lived in circus tents for years, and knew that walls fall down when you lean on them.

The girl he married hated green, and so did he. They were very urban elephants.

And the sociologist was wrong too...they didn't stand up. So the high ceilings merely produced echoes that greatly annoyed the elephants. They moved out in less than six months (Klein 121).

The story illustrates the difficulties faced by those attempting to conduct empirical research in interdisciplinary education while bound to the structures and conventions of a singular area of study. It also speaks to the issues that underline the debate. As Clifford Geertz and Stanley Fish and a host of others have pointed out; "Being interdisciplinary is more than hard to do; it is impossible to do" (Fish 231-242). It means a "blurring of genres", a redrawing of property lines or a reconfiguration with the addition of a new discipline: contextual relations. Most simply, interdisciplinary learning means the co-teaching of at least two faculty members from different departments in the institution. The practitioners of interdisciplinary learning would therefore have to believe that the experience would stimulate new pedagogies; after all, there must be some connection(s) between the different areas of study and the manner in which they have traditionally been studied. They might also find that the energy created in this kind of teaching experience would encourage them to develop new avenues

for research just as the students would be doing.

Indeed, the research indicates that faculty participants in such programs report that they work harder than in their traditional disciplines but that they find the contact with other colleagues energizing. They report that contact with colleagues from other parts of the campus prevents program duplication and faculty "burnout" (Klein 11-13).

The history of interdisciplinarity in the United States really began after World War II. It had many names but the essential ideas were remarkably similar. In 1945, Harvard University published a "redbook" called General Education in a Free Society. It proposed a core curriculum covering Western civilization, literary texts, scientific principles, and English composition, with an additional course in each of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. This was based on what were termed "holistic" courses already initiated at Columbia University and continuing to this day as a seminar program in the issues of the day. The University of Chicago adopted the same model and called it "general education". Their program moved in the direction of community with the hope of dealing, in an interdisciplinary manner, with some of the human problems increasingly being created by specialization. These programs were interesting to pedagogues and theorists but, despite institutional support, they did not immediately trigger any revolutions. Nevertheless, some seeds seem to have been planted.

By the early 1970s, scholars were rediscovering some strong connections between learning theory and the writing process.

Vygotsky described learning as the "deliberate structuring of the web of meaning"...(in writing). Piaget and Dewey discussed learning as a "reorganization of a cognitive scheme in light of an experience"...(in writing) (Emig 122-127). The Writing Across the Curriculum movement was born and, however it was termed, interdisciplinarity became a pedagogical fashion. As Susanne Langer wrote; "All knowledge is interpretation" (Berthoff 164). Writing was acknowledged as an important vehicle for learning in context and as a separate discipline.

Grant monies became available from government agencies, private trusts and philanthropies. Institutions supported W.A.C. programs and a number of faculties participated. There were many different models but all of the projects required some interaction between writing "experts" and other discipline "experts". In some projects, the writing professional became a consultant to a colleague in paper grading or journal reading. In California, the whole state system of higher education was mandated to include a W.A.C. component. Miami-Dade Community College in Florida mandated the writing of a given number of words in every class. Community colleges across the country seemed particularly to welcome these projects. As newcomers to the higher education business, some administrators commented, at least in this movement, that everyone was starting from the same place.

Within the next ten years, educational theorists were building on the W.A.C. movement and the recurring demand that education address the social problems of the day. Faculty were

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strongly urged not only to include writing in their teaching but to encourage critical thinking in their discussions and assignments. Platonic ideas reared their heads at state and national conferences sponsored by philosophy departments. Presenters noted that the "disciplines are artificial and too narrow for multi- logical and ethical issues...they need a more ecological perspective" (Weinstein 123).

Ernest R. Boyer, of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has put the matter in a nutshell; "If I were to sweep away all of the inquiry and all of the speculation, I would reduce the purposes of education to the simple word - connections" (Common). It is what we already have noted: if the subject matter has no relationship to other subjects or to one´s life experience, students cannot put their learning into perspective and move forward into a wider world.

The National Center of Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment research has followed a nationally representative sample of nearly 4,000 students at 26 widely varying institutions through their first three years of college. One of the factors associated with significant increases in mathematics, reading comprehension and critical thinking scores is collaborative learning experiences with groups of students who move through clusters of courses together. When these kinds of experiences are available, two year and historically Black institutions´ entrants improved at a rate comparable to that for four year and predominantly White institutions (N.E.A.).

No matter what it is called; core curricula,

interdisciplinary learning, team teaching, collaboration, or the currently fashionable - learning communities, the connecting of the disciplines appears to be an affective experience for students and energizing experience for faculty. The most successful and long lasting, if peripheral, programs involve the study of broad based social issues which, by definition, require the study of a multiplicity of disciplines. Some of the projects have published curricula and organized national and international conferences. The Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies has been publishing an annual curriculum guide since 1984 and includes syllabi, articles, and teaching techniques contributed by faculties from more than 100 institutions of higher learning around the world (Thomas). More locally, the New Jersey Project on Race, Gender and Class, founded in 1986, has focused its efforts on curriculum transformation that will include sensitivity to issues of diversity in curricula and in pedagogy. Recently, it has published a teaching source book which contains concrete information on curriculum development from faculty in more than 40 two and four year colleges and universities. More than half of the contributions address at least two areas of study. The organization of these courses are as varied as the institutions they house.

Like Columbia, Harvard and the University of Chicago, Princeton University supports the development of new courses, including interdisciplinary efforts, with a "bank" of available F.T.E.'s that faculty, with departmental approval, can use to pilot new projects. In the Winter of 1996, for instance, a

graduate seminar called "Questions Across Disciplines in Women's Studies" was launched. The course was organized by a professor in the English Department but each session was taught by a different scholar from the "humanistic disciplines". Students prepared for the sessions with extensive readings in the discipline of the week. The facilitating English professor was the only connecting link between the sessions. The visiting lecturers donated their services to help the course get off the ground. Despite enthusiastic evaluations from faculty and students, the seminar will not however be offered again for at least another year, perhaps because of limited enrollment.

In 1984, the Interdisciplinary General Education Program of California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, California reported on an experimental program to develop a "learning community of faculty and students who have common goals and mutual aspirations" to work as independent scholars and to develop their intellectual capacities (Jacobs 10). Curricula and pedagogical approaches were developed collaboratively by team teaching faculty and focused on student-centered, problem-solving approaches that emphasized writing and communication skills. Periodic retreats throughout the academic year, for faculty and students, provided ongoing evaluation and revision of the program. This was important because team teaching was a new experience for this faculty and all were teaching outside the traditional orientation of their disciplines. At the end of the first year, all the participants wanted to continue and several other faculty members asked if they could be involved.

New Jersey's Trenton State College reports on a course that is one of a three course required interdisciplinary core sequence. It is called "Change in Society" and was revised from a traditional second semester history course by a faculty development team aiming firstly, to completely integrate gender and diversity issues into the course. Secondly, the team wanted to provide alternative perspectives on the historical events students were learning about. They decided to focus on case studies of how change was effected in specific societies at certain critical times. The case studies are presented in a mass lecture by team faculty members and some guest lecturers. Small student seminar sections are met by other faculty members. References include literature, diaries, films, etc. from a variety of disciplines (Fichner-Ratus 139-146).

With the support of a F.I.P.S.E. grant in the 1983-84 academic year, faculty at the State University of New York at Oswego were released to develop five interdisciplinary courses. The grant included student participants and provided faculty with an opportunity to explore a number of model structures of interdisciplinary thought and study. The faculty members welcomed the students throughout the process because they made for a more practical approach. Their questions helped create a truer synthesis of disciplines: a "metadiscipline".

The program was called "Liberal Studies" and was topic centered around the special interests of the participating faculty members. These were narrowed to five general topics by polling the students and were finally titled: "Women and Men",

" Myth and Symbol", "Tolerance and Prejudice", "The Fallen World", and "Energy Use". All of the courses were planned collaboratively and emphasized exploration and discovery with a multiplicity of perspectives. Because the courses were very much identified with individual department members, there was little continuity when they moved on to other institutions. Nevertheless, their Honors Program, which was subsequently developed and is still flourishing, was based on this seminal work in interdisciplinary studies (Varhus).

As far back as 1978, some administrators and faculty of Urseline College, a small Catholic liberal arts college in Ohio, began to explore pedagogy appropriate for older students. By 1980, the humanities faculty had designed three six credit interdisciplinary courses and had piloted them with N.E.H. grant funds. The college then committed to this interdisciplinary program and required all of its adult students (60% of enrollees) to take at least one of these courses. Each course provides an introduction to the liberal arts and is taught by at least two faculty members from different disciplines.

Courses are specifically designed for pragmatic adult learners who expect to find relevance in what they study. The first course is "Focus On Life" and assists students to make transitions from the work world to academia. "Science and the Human Condition" addresses the impact of technology on contemporary life and the third course, "Humanities Through the Arts," explores the arts not only as aesthetics but also as reflections of human values.

To this day, participating faculty are overwhelmingly enthusiastic. More traditional staff members however, are critical of their methodology which discourages lectures and requires extensive writing. They are hesitant to endorse the program because collaborative course preparation and encouraging students to think independently requires a great deal of planning and flexibility (Moore 136).

George Mason University's New Century College, which opened in 1995, is an effort to respond to students' needs in the world of work. They report that their new College is a compilation of competency-based educational programs and the ideas leading to college learning communities. The College offers a bachelor's degree in integrative studies. Freshmen students take four six week courses, team taught by four or five faculty members from various disciplines. The courses are thematically based; i.e., "Community of Learners", "The Natural World", "The Socially Constructed World", "Self as Citizen". Additionally, they are required in succeeding years, to take twenty-four credits in thematic courses like "Energy and Environment" and "Women and Violence". These are offered in group based learning communities (Chronicle 11/10/95). It is too soon to measure the results of this approach that seems to want to utilize a blend of the most successful of all the new pedagogies. What is known however, is that the enrollment has been above what was anticipated.

The Great Basin Chautauqua program, sponsored by the Nevada Humanities Committee, brought together scholars, artists, business people and other citizens interested in learning about

water related issues in the west. In 1994, faculty at the University of Nevada campus in Reno participated in the teacher education component of the program that brought thirty teachers, from kindergarten through college, for a two week intensive institute on campus. The participants became involved in an interdisciplinary exploration of the nearby Truckee River. The river served as a metaphor and as the focus of historians, biologists, developers, conservationists, economists, sociologists, poets, etc.

All of the methods of inquiry known to the different disciplines were employed to "reading and writing the river." Word of mouth in the community brought faculty and a variety of resources to the project. Trips to the various water distribution sites were preceded by discussion of an extensive book list. In succeeding trips, the variety of university and community guides presented varied cultural perspectives that raised more and more questions. The forums of the Chautouqua itself gave participants a chance to be involved, in a knowledgeable, way in the policy debates about the region. Afterwards, the teachers began to plan their river-based interdisciplinary units to take back to their own classrooms. The curricula materials were varied but all were activity oriented. "They concluded that their personal experiences gave them insights into what could become powerful pedagogy" (Lafer and Tchudi 14-20).

Community colleges have been very supportive of many innovative endeavors. Some institutions have special offerings in Interdisciplinary Studies centering around specific themes that

are subject to change. Most often, as in the four year institutions, these courses are in the humanities. Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey, for instance, has offered such courses team taught by history and English faculty for many years. The administration has supported and encouraged these courses even in times of financial retrenchment. They focus on current issues like "Politics and Culture", "Racism and Nationalism" and include trips to relevant historical sites, films and guest lecturers.

A similar humanities course, a six credit sequence that included history, philosophy, music and literature, was team taught at the County College of Morris, in New Jersey, in the 1970s. Recently, they have begun to think about reviving this kind of course. The N.E.H., in 1993, granted the college funding for a four week summer "Journey Through the Humanities" intensive faculty seminar. The participants were from all departments across the campus. Follow-up projects focused on a thematic, interdisciplinary course chronologically tracing the artist as social critic; thus, revisiting the earlier interdisciplinary effort (Grabowsky 8-10).

Most community colleges are wary about the cost effectiveness of putting the necessary resources into interdisciplinary programs. In 1987, when Chesapeake College in Maryland began to revise the institutional general education core, the faculty discussed the need for a course that would teach students to make meaningful connections between their career courses and their other requirements. An interdisciplinary

committee, representing humanities, natural and social science departments was formed to determine precisely whether such a course was feasible for a community college and if so, what kind of course it would be.

The committee noted the popularity of courses labeled interdisciplinary and the models being utilized in some neighboring institutions. They also noted that making connections between disciplines was not a major goal of most existing programs. Therefore, they decided to concentrate on the similarities among the disciplines. The course in "The Nature of Knowledge" examines different cultural perspectives on experience and then covers topics as diverse as relativity and Marxism from the points of view of different disciplines. Faculty collaborate in all aspects of the course which includes experimenting, readings, journal writing and discussing. Final projects require students to work individually and in teams to demonstrate concretely what they have learned about how the disciplines interconnect (Bounds, Berkowitz, Gilmartin).

Interdisciplinary studies, by definition, involve team teaching, but that can also have different implications. For instance, the ASPIRE (A Student Paper In An Interdisciplinary Research Environment) program at North Arkansas Community College in Harrison, permits students to write one paper that meets the requirements for two or more classes. One of the instructors is always from the English department. In some instances, there is only one other discipline involved as in a paper entitled "Hamlet's Burden" which paired the English professor with someone

from the psychology department. A paper on "Aging in America" however, included faculty from sociology, science and philosophy. Students in any class may participate with the instructor's approval. The college supports the project because it believes that it encourages critical thinking skills and student autonomy and responsibility. Faculty consider this a writing-across-the-curriculum approach that is pragmatic and popular with students. (Hunterthuer, Horrell, Terrill).

This is a pale version of the system reported in 1991, at Solano Community College in California, that links basic content areas with writing classes. Because linked classes have had mixed success, Solano also created a team teaching component to their program. English and "content" classes are scheduled back-to-back and both instructors are present throughout both sessions. Students begin to see how they can use English to learn in other disciplines. They read more primary texts and are less likely to drop two sections when they are having difficulty (Wishner).

At Abraham Baldwin College in Tifton, Georgia, two team teachers from history and English departments, respectively, had the same general goal in creating an interdisciplinary course. Their specific focus was on American history and the use of readings and writings from the historical periods under discussion. They aimed to "approach the study of history and literature as seamless expressions of our national heritage and of our contemporary lives" (Hammons-Bryner & Robinson 97). Unlike the Chesapeake College staff, who wanted the students to learn their differences and similarities, the Baldwin teachers wanted

to be perceived as "seamless" as their disciplines. They stressed activity centered, cooperative projects and participated as co-learners as well as resource people. Because of this approach, students, they discovered, began increasingly to take charge of and design their own learning activities. They asked for additional readings and times for class discussions. Everyone kept evaluative journals and faculty spent many planning hours together. The administration, which had been reluctant to permit the interdisciplinary course, has asked the faculty team to develop a similar offering for the honors program.

Honors programs, particularly those that use the Honor Societies' annual themes, as is the practice at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, almost always present team taught classes. Faculty submit proposals for course development and sometimes the team partners come from disparate disciplines. One of the first courses offered is "Civilization at Risk" that is taught by a psychology professor who is process oriented in the classroom in conjunction with a professor from the speech department who prefers a much more structured pedagogical approach. The two spent many hours identifying and defining how they would present their different perspectives and yet, both report surprise at how different their "teaching styles" are.

Other interdisciplinary courses at Borokdale are also peripheral to most departments but have more concrete themes. "Holocaust Studies" has been team taught for more than a dozen years by a psychology professor and an historian. They both report that their goal is to clearly present the history of a

short period of time as universal and unique. They use texts, films, journals and guest speakers. Because of their years of experience and unity of purpose, they feel confident that they can fill in for each other at any time; they are as "seamless" as the Baldwin faculty.

The problems interdisciplinarians face are myriad and they too vary from one institution to another. Community colleges, particularly those that are actively engaged with locally based businesses or public school districts, find it almost impossible to be effective without an interdisciplinary approach. N.E.A. research indicates that "business leaders...federal policy makers...agree upon the basic skills that are crucial to a core postindustrial workforce" (Barrow 39). These are the skills that are inherent in an interdisciplinary educational setting.

In these times of cost cutting and consolidation, the research indicates, Morris County College is not the only institution to take a new look at old ideas. Brandeis University is redesigning its curriculum into thirty nine interdisciplinary thematic clusters. The University of Rhode Island is considering the establishment of eight research centers in place of the existing departments (45). Instead of targeting interdisciplinary programs for elimination, the new downsizing might mean they will receive strong administrative support. Issues like departmental territoriality, increased faculty workload, and counselor concerns about transfers will become less overwhelming. Institutional policy might mandate a more holistic approach to course planning when it becomes clear that students are better

prepared for the future when they have that experience.

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STUDENT AS TEACHER: COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

by

Carol L. Hunter

Student As Teacher: Cooperative Learning Strategies In The Community College Classroom

by

Carol L. Hunter

"Cooperative learning encompasses both a teaching philosophy and instructional methods that encourage students to work together in groups to maximize learning" (Cinelli 99). The traditional role of teacher is expanded to include facilitator and coordinator of the student groups, which then assume part of the responsibility for instruction. The cooperative learning model, variously described in the literature as "collaborative learning," "experiential learning," or "community of learners," has gained popularity over the last decade. It has been used successfully at every educational level from the primary grades through graduate school, and across diverse academic disciplines.[1]

The belief that cooperative learning strategies could be effectively incorporated into the basic public speaking course to enhance student outcomes led the Brookdale Community College Speech Department to revise its basic course program. This paper will discuss the multiple factors which motivated faculty to undertake the course revision, faculty expectations and reservations concerning implementation of the cooperative learning model, and faculty/student attitudes toward cooperative learning, post revision, accessed through questionnaires and selected interviews.

Experimental and descriptive studies on the subject of cooperative learning support claims that the method can yield a large number of specific benefits to adult learners. The literature to a lesser degree, however, also raises concerns regarding difficulties in implementation, as well as possible negative consequences for students. Many of the factors discussed in the literature are echoed in the attitudes of faculty and students interviewed for this paper. References to specific articles, which discuss aspects of cooperative learning similar to those raised in the faculty and student attitude surveys and interviews discussed herein, will be highlighted in this paper.

Each year approximately 1150 students enroll in the 46 sections of Effective Speech (SPH 115), the basic public speaking course at Brookdale Community

[1] Bruffee makes an interesting distinction between the terms "cooperative learning" and "collaborative learning". The former can help younger children to gain social skills and foundational knowledge, whereas the latter is used with adolescents and adults to enhance nonfoundational education (Bruffee 162).

College. The course traditionally required students to design and deliver 7 speeches over the semester. Student learning experiences included: (1) lecture, (2) assigned textbook readings, and (3) instructor-led class critiques of student speeches. Little or no time was available for group activities or process work of any kind. Students' grades in the course were dependent solely on their grades for the 7 speeches.

Several instructors had used cooperative learning strategies successfully in other courses and were frustrated by the tightly scheduled format of SPH 115 (2/3 of the class sessions were devoted to student speeches and evaluation, with 1/3 of the course devoted to lecture). They expressed dissatisfaction with the course emphasis on graded performances as opposed to learning activities, and suspected that this design served to increase performance anxiety, lower the energy level of the students and ultimately contribute to attrition. These areas of dissatisfaction with the non-collaborative model served as significant motivation to revise the basic course.

Further motivation to redesign Effective Speech was provided by our department's participation in Vision 2020, a faculty development workshop held at Brookdale in 1995, which had as its keynote speaker futurist Ed Barlow. The program focused on educating for the 21st century and highlighted the changing needs of the community college student. Our speech faculty became firmly convinced that the ability to work in groups, appreciation for cultural diversity, increased problem solving skills, enhanced ability to access information and utilize technology were essential skills for our students. The desire to incorporate these goals into SPH 115 became an important factor in the decision to change the curriculum.

The basic public speaking course was revised at the end of the winter 1995 term and taught for the first time in the fall 1995 semester. The number of graded speech performances was reduced to 3 from the original 7, and 6 cooperative learning experiences (workshop activities) were added to the course. Instruction in the course became less teacher directed as students were given the responsibility to teach each other through the completion of the group assignments. The design sought to maximize active learning.

These group assignments include the following: (1) Students present 2 - minute informative speeches during the second class session. These speeches are videotaped and each student reviews his taped performance in a small group during class time. Group members are required to help each other formulate personal delivery goals which are submitted to the instructor; (2) After some preliminary

instruction, students are put into groups of 5 members each and given an hour to work together to construct an informative speech which is then presented to the class by the entire group (or one member whom they select); (3) Students of various skill levels work together in small groups on specific tasks involving the location, retrieval and evaluation of information in the library. This activity gives students the chance to teach each other basic library skills, while the instructor and librarian assist students with advanced work; (4) Following a lecture on interest generating devices, students work in groups to plan specific revisions of their research informative speeches delivered in class 8. Ideas generated are shared with the entire class and students present the revised speeches in the following session; (5) 2 classes are spent in preparation for the persuasive speech, the third and most difficult graded speech assignment. In this session students meet in small groups to review each others' topic selections. They are expected to share their ideas concerning the topics and provide information useful in audience analysis. (6) Student groups review each member's proposition, bibliography and research materials for the persuasive speech. This is a working session where students troubleshoot potential problems in the speech preparation and make useful suggestions.

Points, which figure in the final course grade, are given for participation in each workshop activity. These points are earned by participation in and completion of the activity and are not qualitative. Students may earn a maximum of 80 points for participation in workshop activities 1 through 4 (points earned for activities 5 and 6 are considered part of the persuasive speech grade). Students earn between 70 and 140 points for each of the three graded speech assignments. 70-100 points roughly corresponds to a "C" grade, 101-120 to a "B", and 121-140 to an "A"[2]

The grading procedure was designed to encourage student participation in the cooperative learning activities. Students who earn more than 50 workshop points will likely find their final grade enhanced as a result, particularly if their speech grade points are not close to the maximum available for the grade desired (eg. a student earning a 70 point "C" grade on one speech and a 101 point "B" grade on each of his other two graded speeches could earn a 352 point total for a final grade of "B", if he earned the full 80 participation points). Earning less than 50 participation points is likely to adversely affect the final grade (eg. a student earning a 70 point "C" grade on

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[2] Brookdale Community College uses the designation "Credit", Credit Honors," and "Credit High Honors" in place of the more traditional "C", "B", and "A".

each of his 3 speeches would fall short of the 260 points needed to pass the course unless he earned 50 workshop points). The 440 points required for a course grade of "A" could not be earned without workshop points, even if the student had earned the maximum points available on each graded speech.

Clearly the grading system devised could result in the group work exceeding 10% of the final grade, as discouraged by Cooper (1995). Faculty raised the prevalent concern that points earned for cooperative learning experiences constitute an appropriate portion of the final grade. (Sego 1991).

The decision to adopt cooperative learning strategies was significantly influenced by positive reports in the academic literature, according to a survey of the 4 full time faculty members involved in the course revision. Although none mentioned specific research when interviewed, all made reference to potential benefits of cooperative learning strategies similar to those cited in recent articles supporting the technique. Interviews with faculty revealed their recognition of the importance of increasing our students' capacity for working in groups at a time when the "team approach" has become an integral component of the contemporary workplace (Sego 1991). The active participation of students, increased cognitive skills, greater student satisfaction and higher retention rates reported by Cooper (1995), were also listed as expectations in response to the question: "What were your primary goals/expectations in revising the basic public speaking course?" Courtney,Courtney, and Nicholson (472) review many benefits of cooperative learning including reduced performance anxiety (Ames 1984), the promotion of higher level problem solving skills (Thomas, Iventosch and Rohwer 1986) and increased willingness to use feedback constructively (Austin 1987), all mentioned by the faculty surveyed. Cooperative learning as a means of encouraging an appreciation for cultural diversity was also mentioned (Manning and Lucking 1993). Furthermore, faculty expected that increased group activities would help combat the boredom that can result during the 3 hour class period[3] and help address the problem of our students' shrinking attention span.

Several institutional factors seen as positive supports for adoption of the cooperative learning model caused faculty to be optimistic. First, Brookdale Community College has a non-competitive, non-punative grading system. Students are graded according to mastery of predefined performance objectives. Only successful completion of unit or course objectives is recorded. Students therefore do

[3] Most classes at Brookdale Community College meet once a week for 3 hours.

not fail, but rather work at their own pace to do and redo work until they have completed requirements for the particular grade level they seek (or until they withdraw). This non-competitive institutional culture could enable our department to avoid the problems encountered in other college environments where cooperative learning is seen as a challenge to individualism and competition.

The excellent group management skills of the Speech Department regular and adjunct faculty members was a second factor favoring successful adoption of cooperative learning strategies. All teachers reported at least some experience with the technique in response to the question "How would you describe your prior familiarity with the cooperative learning philosophy and methodology?" Most had expressed interest in incorporating these strategies into the course.

The availability of excellent support services also encouraged the use of cooperative learning. The Department had access to telecommunications services which would allow us to videotape our students' performances for subsequent group analysis. A media specialist was assigned by the Learning Resource Center to help Speech Department faculty develop instructional materials and cooperative learning activities designed to teach research skills utilizing current technology. The media specialist also would become part of the teaching team for the research unit, allowing for the more effective monitoring of student groups. Lastly, the Speech Department learning assistant, a paraprofessional whose primary job responsibility is to provide individual instruction for those students in need of extra help, could be utilized to monitor group out of class activity.

The fact that Brookdale Community College had been founded on the Personalized System of Instruction Model was one constraint for adopting cooperative learning. Although multiple course sections of SPH 115 scheduled throughout the week, during morning, afternoon and evening hours, could provide attendance options for students who might miss a group activity because of lateness or absence, there was still some concern that the student's ability to work at his own pace, and to make up work missed, would be compromised by the new model. Brookdale's students are commuters; most work full or part-time, and they vary greatly in academic ability. All of these factors might suggest the appropriateness of a highly individualized curriculum rather than a cooperative learning curriculum.

Faculty concerns regarding the incorporation of cooperative learning strategies closely mirrored those raised in the literature. They questioned the ability to balance

traditional classroom activities and cooperative activities. Other potential problems mentioned were inadequate student group processing skills, lack of student participation, interpersonal problems within student groups, including dissent, cliques, and an undue burden on gifted students, as reported by Matthews (1992). Difficulty in forming groups and inefficient delivery of course content were also cited.

Student and teacher attitudes toward the revised SPH 115 curriculum were assessed during the last two months of the Winter 1996 semester through the administration of two separate questionnaires. 151 students responded to the survey out of a population 369 active enrollees (41%). 100% of the 9 SPH 115 teachers responded. The teacher questionnaire focused on the degree to which expected benefits and difficulties reported by the faculty at the outset of the project, and discussed in the academic literature, actually materialized. The student survey attempted to gauge student perceptions and attitudes relative to the cooperative learning strategies used in the course. Both questionnaires asked subjects to respond to questions using a four point scale.

Teachers were asked the degree to which 9 specific benefits occurred following the revision of SPH 115. Possible responses included: A - not at all (1 point), B - slightly (2 points), C - significantly (3 points), or D - not sure (0 points). None of the anticipated benefits were felt to have significantly accrued.

None of the teachers felt that the revision had increased course completion rates more than slightly (average response was 1.57). It should be noted that no comparison of actual student completion rates pre and post revision was made. No teachers believed that the absentee rate had decreased any more than slightly. Of the 9 teachers, 7 felt that there had been a slight improvement but 2 answered "not at all" (1.78). Teachers did not believe that the cooperative learning strategies had enhanced appreciation for cultural diversity (1.4), nor did they see a reduction in performance anxiety (1.62).

Students, on the other hand, repeatedly mentioned the reduction of performance anxiety as a perceived benefit of participation in their cooperative learning groups. The following comments were typical: "You get to meet new people and become comfortable with your audience." "Becoming more comfortable with other students lets you be more open and relaxed."

Other benefits which teachers perceived as accruing slightly or better included increased student problem solving skills (2.0), enhanced student ability to process

feedback (2.14), improved student ability to work in groups (2.22), and increased student attention in class (2.17).

Teachers also felt that the course revision contributed to improved student grades (2.11). When asked whether grade inflation, a difficulty which had been predicted prior to the course revision, had materialized, faculty response averaged 1.78, with 4 responding "not at all," 3 "slightly," and 2 "significantly." Student response to the question: "were you satisfied with the way your group activities influenced the grade you received in this course?" were more than satisfied (3.27).[4] Of the 147 respondents, only 8 were dissatisfied and 1 very dissatisfied. Students responding to the question: "What did you like about working in groups in this class?" mentioned "how it influenced my grade," and "the extra points I earned."

Teachers did not perceive any of the 9 potential difficulties in implementation of cooperative learning, predicted at the outset of the course revision and reported in the academic literature,, as materializing even slightly. Teacher response fell between "not at all" and "slightly" when asked about the occurrence of inadequate student group processing skills (1.75), difficulty in forming balanced groups (1.71), restriction of student ability to work at his own pace (1,86), and the formation of cliques in class (1.5).[5]

"Not at all," was the unanimous response of the 9 teachers when asked whether the use of cooperative learning strategies had led to inefficient delivery of course content. This response was supported by their comments on the questionnaire, such as: "[We had] more time to focus on the dynamics of speech making through class exercises;" "I can spend more time evaluating each student," and "scheduling allowed more time for students to improve."

Overall, instructors did not feel that there had been interpersonal problems within student groups (1.78). However, instructors did make reference to interpersonal difficulties in their survey comments (for example: "some groups did not mesh." "One student of mine requested that she not be grouped with a male classmate whom she found intimidating.").

Although students also perceived their groups to have worked together satisfactorily (3.49), with only one of the 150 respondents replying "poorly" to the

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4 For this question possible responses were: very satisfied (4 points), satisfied (3 points), dissatisfied (2 points), or very dissatisfied (1 point).

5 One student respondent asked to indicate what he disliked about the technique noted that "students are already familiar with each other and form their own little groups."

question "how well did your groups work together," student comments did indicate interpersonal difficulties. In response to the question: "What did you dislike about working in groups in this class," students mentioned the fact that some people could not get along. They cited "bossiness", some members of the group not doing their fair share of the work, "difficult personalities," and uncooperative group members among the specific interpersonal problems encountered.

Instructors did not believe that cooperative learning activities had placed an undue burden on "gifted" students (1.33) One teacher wrote, "I observed that 'gifted' students often sought out the weaker students in group activities in an attempt to help. In the LRC [learning resource center] students who had prior knowledge were willing to assist others, some of whom were visiting the LRC for the first time."

Some student comments, however, did reveal resentment of underprepared classmates who were perceived as not making meaningful contributions to the group. One respondent wrote that he disliked "having to listen to opinions [of], or having to be rated by people of marginal initiative and/or intelligence."

Despite the difficulties noted, students overwhelmingly enjoyed working in groups according to survey results. 132 students responded to the question: "How did you feel about working in groups in this course?" Student response averaged 3.45, between "I liked working in groups (3.0) and "I liked working in groups a great deal" (4.0). 18 students were neutral; 5 answered "disliked", and none responded "strongly disliked". These results parallel the findings of Courtney, Courtney, and Nicholson (1994). Results of their survey of the graduate education students who had participated in a cooperative format class as part of a study, indicated that "96% felt positively about the cooperative learning methodology" (475).

"Working in groups made the class fun," one SPH 115 student wrote. Another wrote, "I enjoyed sharing with others and learning from them." These comments were fairly typical of the student survey response. Not only did students enjoy the learning experience, but most of them felt that cooperative learning strategies had helped them master the course material (3.145). Only 9 of the respondents felt that the group work had not been helpful.

Teachers surveyed made the following comments on specific strategies which they felt worked particularly well in the course. Having clear objectives for each group exercise helped keep groups on track and guarded against inefficient use of time. Close monitoring of group work by the instructor also helped guard against wasted

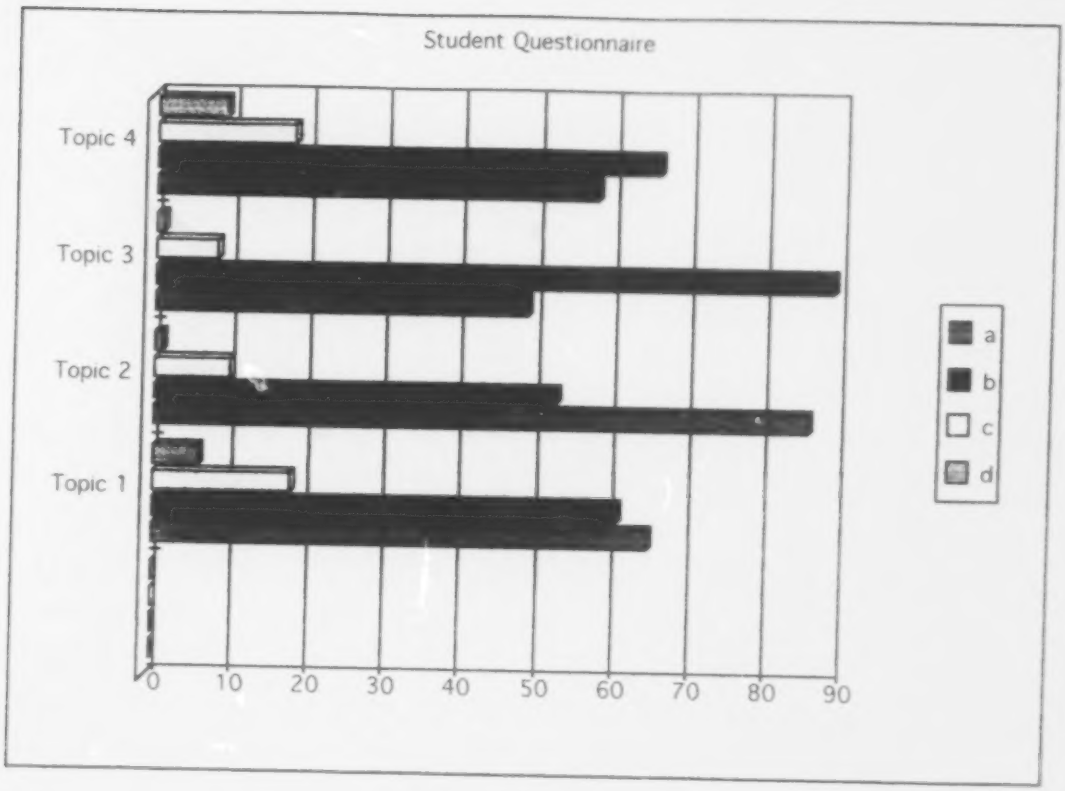
time and encouraged students to actively participate. Having students assume a teaching role was beneficial in maximizing individual instruction for those in need of special help and at the same time built student confidence. Having the group work count toward the course grade encouraged broader participation in the workshop activities Emphasizing process rather than product evaluation for a large part of the course, seems to alleviate some student stress and gives the instructor a clearer idea of exactly where a particular student may be having trouble with course material.

Techniques which did not work well, teachers felt, included the grading point system, which can be confusing to the students. The speech department will be working to simplify the point system. Teachers were also concerned that there was no mechanism for students who were absent for legitimate reasons to make up the points lost by failing to participate in the cooperative learning activity. Students who had suffered an extended illness found their ability to earn a good grade in the course seriously compromised no matter how hard they might work to catch up.

It is interesting to note, that although the course was revised by the 4 full-time faculty members without consulting the adjunct faculty, there was no appreciable difference in survey results for the regular versus the adjunct faculty members, nor were there differences in the survey results of their respective students. In retrospect, the speech department would have been well advised to involve adjunct faculty in the course revision process. Instructor enthusiasm for the cooperative learning techniques can be a very important factor in the success of the methodology.

This paper has examined teacher attitudes prior to the decision to revise the basic public speaking course to include cooperative learning strategies, and it has examined teacher and student attitudes post course revision in an effort to assess how closely their perceptions resemble published descriptions of the positive and negative aspects of cooperative learning. While teacher/student perceptions, descriptive analyses, and anecdotal evidence can be valuable, it would seem that objective evidence as to the relative efficacy of these techniques can be highly instructive. Future research which compares such outcomes as course completion rates, grade distribution, subsequent enrollment in second level or advanced courses within the discipline, for students enrolled in the traditional basic public speaking course and those participating in a cooperative learning model, can serve as a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies. In the final analysis, based on the subjective data presented herein, the Brookdale Community College Speech

Department has found the use of cooperative learning strategies to be beneficial for our students, and we plan to continue these strategies in the basic public speaking course.



STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How did you feel about working in groups in this course? (circle the response that most closely describes your attitude)
    a. I liked working in groups a great deal.
    b. I liked working in groups.
    c. I neither liked nor disliked working in groups
    d. I disliked working in groups.
    e. I strongly disliked working in groups.
2. How well did your groups work together?
    a. Very well
    b. Satisfactory
    c. Some problems
    d. Poorly
3. Were you satisfied with the way your group activities influenced the grade you received in this course?
    a. Very satisfied
    b. Satisfied
    c. Dissatisfied
    d. Very dissatisfied
4. How well did the group activities in Speech 115 help you master the material studied in the course?
    a. Very helpful
    b. helpful
    c. Slightly helpful
    d. Not helpful

Teacher Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions concerning your attitudes prior to the 1995 revision of Speech 115.

1. What was your primary motivation for revising the basic public speaking course?

2. To what degree was your decision to incorporate cooperative learning strategies influenced by positive reports in the academic literature?
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Mostly

3. To what degree did your dissatisfaction with the traditional public speaking course motivate your decision to revise the basic course?
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Mostly

4. What were your primary areas of dissatisfaction with the non-collaborative model?

5. What were your primary goals/expectations in revising the basic public speaking course?

6. What areas of difficulty, if any, did you predict

7. How would you describe your prior familiarity with the cooperative learning philosophy and methodology?

Teacher Post-Revision Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions concerning your attitudes toward the 1995 revision of Speech 115. **The results of this survey will be used to structure subsequent interviews and are not meant to be used as a statistical sample of teacher attitude.**

1. To what degree did the following benefits occur following the revision of Speech 115?

   A. increased course completion rates
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   B. reduced performance anxiety
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   C. Enhanced student ability to process feedback
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   D. Improved student ability to work in groups
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   E. Enhanced student appreciation for cultural diversity
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   F. Increased student problem solving skills
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

   G. Decreased absentee rate
      a. Not at all
      b. Slightly
      c. Significantly
      d. Not Sure

H. Increased Student Attention In Class
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

I. Improved Student Grades
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

2. Please list any additional benefits which you feel accrued from the course revision.

3. What do you feel were the difficulties in using cooperative learning strategies in Speech 115?

4. To what degree did the difficulties predicted at the outset of the Speech 115 course revision process materialize?

A. Lack Of Student Participation?
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

B. Interpersonal Problems Within Student Groups
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

C. Grade Inflation
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

D. Inadequate Group Processing Skills
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

E. Difficulty In Forming "Balanced" Groups?
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

F. Restriction Of Student Ability To Work At His Own Pace
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

G. Formation Of Cliques In The Class
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

H. Inefficient Delivery Of Course Content
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

I. Placement Of An Undue Burden On "Gifted" Students
   a. Not at all
   b. Slightly
   c. Significantly
   d. Not Sure

5. What specific strategies worked particularly well in this course?

6. What specific strategies did not work well in this course?

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Pat Kalata

History 530

Generational clash in the Academy: Whose culture is it anyway.

"Knowledge and ignorance are questions of degree, of territory, not matters of absoluteness" (Diller, 141).

The current crop of college students has a culture of its own, as any generation does. They have cultural icons and skills we never dreamed of. For them there was no life before television and the internet. They have yet to experience a major watershed event, such as a war or major politican tragedy. They see education differently than prior generations. The question is then: How can we make connections between their culture and the culture we, as college instructors, value and would like to see them adopt? The beginning lies in understanding more about this group: their experiences and their expectations as they relate to this group's time in college. When discussing current college students, I am aware that many of our students are older, returning adults but they are seldom included when college faculty share tales of woe and inadequate preparation, motivation and academic ability. The students under discussion in this paper are those identified as members of Generation X, also called the 13rd generation, or the Sesame Street generation: the age group between 18 and 29. These are the people who fill the bulk of seats in college classrooms and, as such, are the very people college administrators and faculty seek to understand. It is to these people that we teachers attempt to impart the wisdom of the ages, despite their resistance. Oftentimes, we feel like the proverbial mother: "Take this; it's good for you." "You'll be a better person someday for having had this experience." or "This hurts me more than it does you."

We like to believe that, when we were young, we valued a college education as the door to the world of ideas, nothing more or less. Unlike the students of today, we were interested only in the purity of knowledge and intellectual discourse. The college teachers of today were the college students of the 1950's and 1960's. During those decades, many children of working class families seized the opportunity to attend college because they, and their families, saw college as the way to attain better and more secure employment. At that time, the creation of community colleges and national prosperity combined to fuel the upsurge in first generation college attendants. College, in the eyes of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, the eyes of people who had lived through the Great Depression and a world war, was a means to the very clear end of greater security. And, in some part of our minds, we agreed, even while eager to pursue knowledge in a well loved field.

How different was that experience from the decision of today's students who want to major in nursing or computer science so that they'll be able to find a job. Yes, there are differences - real differences - but too often we, as college teachers, face our students with dismay. We see their lack of knowledge and interest in general culture as a spreading virus corrupting civilization and putting the future of the planet in jealousy. We share horror tales of reluctant, unprepared, self-absorbed students who cause individual and collective difficulty for us. But how did they get that way? And what does their presence mean for higher education and society at large? Are we really facing classes of "half adults" as Robert Bly identifies them? (8-13) Or is this generational change just one more reflection of national evolution?

When I refer to culture in this paper, I am speaking of more than the fine arts and literature that form the common foundation of many of our existences. In the case of generations prior to this current one, that

foundation has been fairly stable for a long time. The canon of literature was cast in granite and the hierarchy of every social institution was entrenched. Recently, Bloom, Hirsch, and others have advocated the return to a traditional standard as the necessary foundation of true learning and culture. These authors provide lists of names, dates, and works of art the knowledge of which they maintain is the measure of successful education. Currently, many students are unfamiliar and uninterested in this general culture.In this new generation, the cultural foundation is made of quicksand that underlies a shifting landscape. Everything in the world of our students moves faster than we are accustomed to. People today are being hit by more messages than anyone could attend to. Attention spans are shorter and it is more difficult to maintain focus on any subject for any period of time beyond the length of a sound bite. The proof of this is in the world of popular culture. Rock bands become popular and make millions, only to disappear as quickly. Television shows rise and fall in popularity in one season. Everything new is quickly embraced and quickly discarded. The only thing constant is change. It is hard to environ any contemporary singer or group having the lasting devotion afforded a Frank Sinatra or Elvis Presley. The foundations of higher education have suffered along with the rest of society. Change is around each corner and often, the very people we despair of are demanding that we prove our message worthy before they pay attention.

Background

These young people are very different from the generations before them, first of all, because their experience of family life and community has been radically different from any preceding generation. Never before have so many children grown up with working mothers. In 1985, Holtz reported that the percentage of children whose mothers (in two parent families) worked was

68% for ages 6-17 and 53% for those under the age of 6. These percentages continue to increase. At the same time, nucleus families are living away from relatives capable of providing support and haven for family members.

In addition, the rate of divorce increased dramatically over the span of the last few decades. Households headed by single parents, usually the mother, became more of a norm. "Divorce hit a high in 1980 with 226 per 10,000 women fifteen years and older and leveled out at 208 per 10,000 women in 1987 (Ritchie, 40). Now, with remarriages, blended families require children as well as new marriage partners to adjust to new family members. Quasi siblings show up on alternate weekends and for a few weeks in the summer. Rooms are kept ready for them and the household adapts to their needs and wants on a regular basis. Even the definition of a family has changed with 71% of Generation X agreeing that a family is any two or more people who love and take care of each other. For 70%, a family is a single mother and a child and 46% believe that a gay or lesbian couple with children is a family (Ritchie, 43).

These changes also extent to the economical situation in the household. For a while, divorce was the chief culprit as women were forced to down scale their standard of living. Now, the economy is changing rapidly as companies merge and downsize. Parents of both genders suffer. If the marriage is intact, one or both may find themselves unemployed or underemployed. The secure home life children expected may disappear or change, often on a regular basis. The fathers who held onto jobs they hated for the sake of paying a mortgage and sending children to college are suddenly sitting home. Many couples determined to keep ahead of the economy with duel employment, or multiple jobs for each. The rate of inflation makes two incomes necessary for a household to maintain the standard of living as one income during the 1950's.

For these reasons, many more of these children started their group experience at early ages and many, because of family financial limits, were placed in inadequate care . While a mother may not be the only person able to supervise a young child, there seems to be evidence that the lack of a permanent caretaker has poor results. "Children who entered low quality child care as infants had the most difficulty with peers as preschoolers." (Holtz, p. 46). These children start school being easily distracted, less task-oriented and more hostile. more importantly, young children also were increasingly cast in terms of only their own peer group, taking their social cues from same age children. They have few older role models as their interaction with adults and older children was limited. Even the relationship with their own parents was often confined to a few minutes a day. Parents, feeling guilty for lack of time with their children, tried to make up for it in various ways, often with material gifts and privileges these parents did not have in their own youth.

This peer dominated life only increased as this group entered formal schooling. As these children grew, they became latchkey children. This often meant that children as young as seven years arrived home to an empty house, a phone call from mom, written instructions and the television waiting to keep them company. One inner city teacher I know complains of the obesity of her third grade students; they are instructed by their parents to go home and lock the door so they spend their afternoons snacking and watching cartoons. The neighborhood streets are too unsafe for them so there is no playing and roughhousing in the fresh air for them. They are not unique. Many children watch long hours of television alone or with friends instead of with older family members. While 50% of fifth graders were reporting less than four minutes a day reading, they were watching television 130 minutes every day (Bly,11).

This is the first generation that has grown up with television's constant presence in the home and the rapid onslaught of other media. They surf the net and channels by the hundreds. Their attention span is short but capable of attending to multiple input without suffering sensory overload. In fact, they prefer it that way. If you ask a college student how much television he watched in a day, he may claim little or none. If you ask how many hours the television is on in his home, you get a very different response. One student told me, "Oh, I guess twenty hours."

"There is an information overload. There are too many cable channels. Too many crises from all over the world are being featured on their local channels. There are too many authorities with competing clashing claims." (Loeb 36) This generation has absented itself from the real conflicts presented on television, partly because of this overload factor.

While Generation X is truly concerned about real life violence, they are much more inured to violence in the media (Ritchie, 100). They look to other sources for a less complex, less serious version of the world. Tabloid TV rating for this group is steadily increasing with 3.1% of 18-34 year olds regularly viewing Current Affair, 3.2 watching Hard Copy. 2.8 watching Inside Edition and 1.9 watching Nightline (Ritchie, 106). Countless college students watch talk shows. The power of MTV in the last presidential campaign with its "Choose or Lost" campaign is forcing politicians to reformulate their own media presentations to accommodate Generation X's preferred style (Solomon,20). When I asked a Journalism class to prepare a questionnaire that would not be understood by people over thirty, three of the fifteen questions were directly concerned with MTV; ten other ones were concerned with rock singers and groups. (Appendix A) When one student saw the questionnaire, he commented, "We spend way too much time with MTV."

MTV and other quick moving and energetic media promote new cultural icons for this group. "Madonna's appeal was both honest and naughty; she symbolized for Xers both a victory over the system and a parody of their parents in the 1980's" (Ritchie, 104). She became a cultural hero for many young people who frankly admire her ability to manipulate cultural norms. Popular figures like Madonna endure as long as they continue to come up with new and more outrageous stunts. Being boring, even for a moment, has become the worst sin, a swift ticket out of the limelight.

Television became this generation's standard for reality. On television, most people are middle class or wealthy. The poor only exist as criminals or as victims who need outside assistance to battle a heartless system. Solutions are always found in timely fashion. Life on television is never subjected to long stretches of boredom. These children have grown into young adults believing that life should always be interesting and solutions always possible.

Generation X members do not see themselves as part of a community and accountable to it. Their community on television changes all the time. Their addresses may change frequently. Their close friends may be few in number and they may have only one parent, usually working too many hours, available. And often these young people are reluctant to bother a parent whom they view as already "stressed to the max". They learned to take responsibility only for themselves and like it that way. Their relationship with authority figures is not grounded in respect or fear.

"Most of them had led peer-centered existences for years before arriving at college. In their public high schools and in their homes and families, they had become masters at avoiding the close scurvily of adults, or at manipulating adult authority when they could not avoid it. Incoming [college]

freshmen women and men also typically said that their parents had voluntarily given them more freedom - later nighttime curfews, fewer questions about their private behavior" (Moffatt, 34).

Furthermore, throughout their school experience, they have found academic standards slipping. Penalties were rarely exacted in elementary and high school for incomplete assignments or for minimum completion of assignments. Self-esteem took on great importance in classroom functioning. Tracking in high schools limited the heavy academic courses to the top ten or fifteen percent of the student body. Few students were placed in vocational education. The majority of students(47%) were placed in general education tracks. Teachers in elementary schools as well as high schools complain about the lowering of requirements and the lack of parental support and presence in the schools. Both the SATs and GREs have slipped. The average SATs Math score in 1967 was 491, and in 1993, 478. The Verbal in 1967 was 467 and in 1993, 424.

Secondary education begun to fall short of traditional strict requirements that were seen as preventing independent thinking. "For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents" (Littman, 98). Students, parents and professionals agree that high school was too easy. The National Commission on Excellence in Education called American high school education "a tide of mediocrity "; It blamed "a smorgasbord" of easy electives that have replaced traditional academic courses. "Students in all tracks,even college preparatory, were spending less time on English, math, language, and other academic courses and more time on remedial and physical education and "personal service and development" courses, such as budgeting, band, chorus, and typing." (Littwin, 42-43)

Is training for teaching and the general low regard for teachers contributing to the problem? Many education majors admit to not liking reading and only course required material. Currently, those students majoring in education are to be found in the bottom third of their class. As the respect for teachers and support for education continues to decrease, there is no indication that this situation will improve.

Experience

More high school graduates are choosing college (57.9% in 1989). However, at the same time, many of them are active employees. In 1969, 43 percent of all college students worked outside jobs. By 1990, it was 63 percent. It certainly has increased. Many of these students are full time employees. At the same time, they insist on taking a full course load. Conflicts over their use of time naturally occur. One student, when I expressed concern over his absences, replied, "I'm paying my own way. I have three jobs. If they call me to come in and I don't, I can lose my job. I can always catch up here." But catching up and staying ahead can be difficult or even impossible.

"During the 1970's and 1980's, older, nontraditional students fueled the growth of community colleges, but during the early 1990's, significant numbers of 18 to 24 year olds who ultimately want to receive a baccalaureate degree are spending the first two years at lower cost institutions and living at home. The recession of the early 1990's played a significant role in college enrollment. According to the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, the number of first-year students who chose colleges because of low tuition or financial aid or in order live near home reached a record high in 1991. Over one fourth of the students surveyed selected colleges in order to live near

home, while over 7% said they were attending college because they could not find jobs" (Sidel, 38).

The resulting changes in student attitudes and values include a greater interest in material and power goals, coupled with decreased social concern and altruism and a greater support for student autonomy and for reduced institutional control over the lives and life choices of students. (Astin, 26)

They are at once more flexible and less idealistic than the preceding generations. "Student resignation both results from and furthers a more general erosion of American political life. Students say they are afraid to act, don't know how, and fear the consequences of even thinking about the urgent issues of their time" (Loeb, 25). They are more multicultural than their parents. Some have learned prejudice in their homes but they also have learned what is not acceptable in the public spheres of their lives. "Many Xers understand the hard-won access to racial and sexual equality as a given. In most cases, their environment was racially diverse from childhood. Most Xers did not have to grapple with the struggle for integration" (Ritchie, 57). They may believe that battles are already won or there is no point in fighting on.

Expectations

"By the mid-eighties, national surveys of high school seniors found that 90% expected things to get better for themselves, but only 47% of young men and 34% of young women believed the situation in the country as a whole would improve. The split in expectations leads them to prepare themselves for sale to the highest bidder, while keeping larger ideals blurred in the remote closets of their souls. Whatever troubles might come, they hope to ride them out through skills, persistence, and hard work." (Loeb, 18) College is seen as the arena of preparation.

The current crop of students is more interested in jobs than in the life of the mind. 75% of current college freshmen (1989) give as their goal in attending college to be very well off financially. 72% hope to make more money by attending college. Only 41% chose the opportunity to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. In 1970, 80% of all freshmen ranked this last choice as very important. (Holtz, 128) When I asked students about the same list of reasons for attending college, 80% said they were there to get a better job. Almost 100% were enrolled to be able to make more money. 20% expected to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. However, over half of the small sample I polled (twenty five Composition students) wanted to do at least one of the following: Gain a better appreciation of ideas, gain more culture and learn about interesting things. I recently asked the students in a Journalism class why they were in college and gave them two options: to get a good job or to learn more about critical thinking and moral values. When I mentioned the last two options, the students hooted good naturedly. The day before, a student in the same class, after excitedly telling me about everything he was learning and doing in an internship at a local paper. said "I don't know whether I want to work on a newspaper; reporters don't make all that much." These responses are consistent with those of students surveyed in 1988 by the American Council on Education.

The concern for security in the future is reflected in their choice of majors with only one student in twenty-five majoring in Liberal arts and two undecided. The others' choices were grouped in business with accounting leading, communication, computer science and information systems, nursing, physical therapy, criminal justice, education, construction management and graphic arts. Many of these programs have associate degrees available and others can be either terminal associate degrees or transfer programs. These

students seem to be preparing if employment is needed or available at any future stage. Required Liberal Arts courses only get in the way of this goal.

Currently, in four year colleges, the major most preferred by students across the country is business with foreign languages as the least preferred. "A few [students] found genuine delight in the gamesmanship of finance or sales. Yet most flocked to these careers not from intrinsic interest, but from their sense that comfort and security superseded all other goals" (Loeb, 54). Even though the business world has suffered massive layoffs, it is still seemed as the logical arena for achieving success. Other majors have appeal because they offer opportunity for security. Nursing has become popular because many students believe that health care providers are always needed, despite the reality that hospitals, like other businesses, are cutting back on their staffs. At Rutgers, the economics program enrolls 32% of all students The top ten majors listed at Rutgers were Economics, English, Psychology, Political Science, Biological Science, Communications, History, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Accounting.

However, even while students enroll in majors that they hope will provide some kind of job security, they seem to resent professors' efforts to expanse their minds. They want the grades they believe that they are entitled to by virtue of enrolling in the class. "They wanted to be graded...not because they considered grades a legitimate measure of achievement, but because they viewed them as pragmatically necessary - a way to prove they could fit into the requisite slots" (Loeb, 97). They have come by these expectations honestly. Their past experiences have taught them that showing up guarantees a passing grade. Therefore, doing anything more should merit an above average grade.

The liberal arts suffer most from the emphasis on employability. Because subjects are only as important as their relationship to the job market,

literature and history are viewed as frills appropriate for a few elite students. As a consequence, it is often more difficult to strike a spark in the liberal arts classroom. Students come prepared with a certain detachment. Few technical or business programs leave much room for electives and many programs have long lists of suggested options. The tight curriculum for these majors and outside jobs also lead to a narrow focus so that many of these students don't take advantage of cultural activities offered on the campus.

Yet, even as they strive for the academic key to good paying jobs, contemporary students know that their prospects are continually being limited by circumstances over which they have no control. They have caught glimpses of the good life but see it as fading gradually into the distance. In many cases, they are already coping with the decline in the job market. In 1970, there were two jobs for every college graduate. In 1993, there was one job for every 1.6 graduates. The 1996 graduating class from the University of Pennsylvania is one third employed. And, as one unemployed banking executive maintains, "Now these graduates are competing with their parents for available positions." America's economic crunch makes it hard for students to take responsibility for more than just personal survival. "Compared to twenty years ago, they work more hours at outside jobs, graduate more in debt, and face more uncertain economic futures. They have fewer choices of what to take and fewer resources to finance their learning" (Loeb, 44).

Frequently, these are the students seen as operating academically in a detached way, wanting the respect afforded mature members of society by virtue of their long work records, while placing the responsibility for their education solely on teachers. This is partly due to the message they believe that they have received from society. "The recent American individualistic self.. is a "Privatized" self, an inward psychological entity of personal beliefs,

values and feelings." (Moffatt, 41) Littman adds, "The total picture seems to be one of blissful self-centeredness, of young adults who are indifferent to not only politics and political institutions, but to society as a whole. They appear to have no sense of any community larger than their own households." (232) And, since their community is so limited, they feel no obligation to society.

Conclusion

We may believe that the purpose of an university education is to pass on information, teach social skills and improve the individual as well as help society. However, there is a clash of ideals when speaking about education to Generation X. Our students see a world of uncertainty. We are asking them to be interested in issues without perceived purpose or over which they have no control.

What can be done? Maybe, we need to start with their real concerns. Assignments can be shown to reflect the skills needed in the "real world" across a range of occupations . Skills like analysis, problem solving, working to a deadline, coordination, adaption to new situations, making judgments with inadequate data and even the educated prediction of trends and developments in technology and the economy are needed in the future. These skills can be honed to perfection in liberal arts courses. Since there is no way for college to stay ahead of the market without the constant shifting of emphasis and funds, we need to reexamine ways of promoting skills, like critical thinking, that students need in a changing world in all areas of the curriculum. More and more, we need to go back to the community at large and help our students to connect to the rest of the world in meaningful ways. This means both sending students into the community with class assignments and bringing the community to the classroom with citizens from all fields participating in

college life. "By giving the school system exclusive control over education, reforms encouraged a division of cultural labor that would weaken the people's capacity to educate themselves... The teaching functions would be concentrated in a class of professional specialists, whereas it ought to be diffused throughout the whole community. An educational establishment was just as dangerous as a priestly or military establishment" (Lasch 66). Moving education into the community could remove this separation and as other citizens see the colleges in operation, increase respect for higher education. A required or optional service learning component in many courses may produce more concerned and active citizens willing to take part in government and civil affairs at every level. We need to assist students to develop[both a private self and a public self. Then, we may be able to instill in the private self a real commitment to the public needs.

Finally it may be time that we reflect on our own journeys to our present positions. In our introduction to the general culture and its values, what steps did we take and who provided the signposts for us? Maybe, we need to take ourselves and our fields both more and less seriously in order to see our areas as part of the whole. We need to reaffirm to ourselves and our students the wonder and beauty of learning, to trumpet our love of learning, to use contemporary culture to connect to traditional culture and to expect miracles. "The university not withstanding its present disarray, is a "sacred institution" and teachers can set an example for others if they approach their calling in a spirit of reverence. The office of the devoted teacher is not to deify or even defend a "dying culture" but to resist the "downward identification" that threatens any form of culture at all." (Lasch, 221). For whatever reason we chose college teaching as a vocation, we have this sacred trust.

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appendix A

Do You Know?

1. What are the names of the members of Boys 2 Men?
2. Who is Banana Yoshemoto?
3. What does "NIN" stand for?
4. What night is "Melrose Place" shown?
5. Define Alternative Music and name an alernative band.
6. How do you use a pager?
7. How many watts are in your car stereo?
8. What show does Pamela Lee star in?
9. Which of these is a band: Garbage or Green Jelly?
10. Name two shops on South Street.
11. Who is the lead singer of the Stone Temple Pilots?
12. Name three characters on 90210.
13. Who is Kurt Loder?
14. What was the name of Alanis Morrisette's first hit song?
15. What MTV show matches couples?

FACULTY / ADMINISTRATION RELATIONS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Princeton Mid Career Fellowship
Academic Year 1995 - 96

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Faculty / Administration Relations in Community Colleges

I. Who Are The Participants/Players?

Here are some statistics that were gathered from the 1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U. S. Department of Education. In just one generation community colleges expanded from only a few institutions to 1,024. They have become a major sector of postsecondary education by providing nearly universal access. They hire over a quarter million faculty members to provide education to 5.4 million students each year.

There is near parity in the share of men and women teaching in community colleges. Women made up almost half or 46%. Minority faculty members only make up 15% of the full-time faculty. Just over half, 52% of the full-time faculty had tenure and another 15% percent were on a tenure track. Community colleges hire more part-time faculty members than any other sector in higher education. According to this source, we are not as old as I had thought. Just over 10% of the full-time faculty members were 60 years or older. Seventy-six per cent were under 54 years old and

the rest were in between.

Let's move away from numbers and take a brief look at some of the forces that have shaped the community college professorate (McGrath & Spear, 1991).

. fairly large reliance on part-timers

. faculty unionization

. drive for educational technology

. the weakening and even the disappearance of courses beyond the intro level

. geographical fragmentation of colleges into numerous community sites

They (McGrath & Spear, 1991) continue with the premise that community college teachers can become part of a "practitioners' culture" and come to undervalue intellectual exchange and mutual criticism. And additionally, any conscious link between theory and practice is broken.

Institutional administrators and governing boards may be seen by themselves and others as making the important decisions for colleges. In fact, they deal only with operational and procedural matters (Ashworth,1993). The way in which the tasks are executed is often the source of conflict between the college president and the faculty (Bing and Dye, 1992). It is often the choice of paradigm used for leadership rather than the actual event that fuels the central conflict. The most common cause of a failed college presidency is taking precipitant action, with either token or no consultation. It can involve a task-oriented, rational managerial act, but one that appears insensitive to

the human aspects of the organization. The president notifies the faculty but did not negotiate or involve the faculty in the process (Birnbaum, 1992). A classical hierarchical system of governance focused on the "effective" college president who is strong, decisive, and silent. This president listens to constituent groups, yet boldly makes decisions and imposes them. The implication is that faculty members were either not to be trusted or unable to deal with issues in a positive fashion. In a college, the solitary decision-making process erodes any sense of community.

Hierarchical systems are powerful and can be effective in organizations like the military and a variety of large corporations. However, they are disastrous in the academy. In a hierarchical model of governance, people learn quickly to tell leaders what leaders want to hear. No one introduces new insights. The process of critical, public examination declines and the result is a loss of vitality and a lack of responsiveness (Bing and Dye, 1992).

If a president is a leader, then she or he must be open to collegial governance and be astute and courageous enough to teach others how to achieve it. Presidents with high support were judged by their faculty leaders as being both technically competent and concerned with people as well as organizational tasks (Birnbaum, 1992)). These presidents were seen as working within established governance structures; accepting faculty participation in decision making, being concerned for process and as having a strong sense of values that were consistent with the purposes and missions of the institution. And when they acted contrary to the faculty will they did

so in a manner that reflected their respect for the faculty and for the process.

LEADERSHIP AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

College presidents with high support were seen as:

a. Accepting faculty participation in decision making

b. Being concerned for process

c. Having a strong sense of values that were consistent with the purposes and missions of the institution

d. Seeing the college mission as a means to achieve some larger purpose

.Advancement of knowledge

.Provision/educational opportunity

.Inculcation of ethical values

e. Being seen by others as fair and ethical

f. Keeping promises once they had been made

g. Not being afraid to tackle controversial problems

h. Stating thair positions clearly

i. Being forthright when they acted contrary to the faculty will

(Birmbaum, 1992)

These criteria challenge the human frailties of most qualified academic leaders. It seems a genuinely popular academic administrator is really a contradiction in terms.

The central conflict between the college president and the faculty is not always concerned with the allocation or reduction of resources, as is the frequently the stated rationale. Rather, it is often the choice of paradigm used for leadership (Bing & Dye, 1992). The Fisher & Tack paradigm described a classical hierarchical system of governance focused on the "effective" college president who is strong, decisive, and silent. This president listens to constituent groups, yet boldly makes decisions and imposes them on the university community. Fisher & Tack took a dim view of the idea of a collegial institution. They labeled leaders of such institutions "representative presidents," implying that they were mere figureheads. By contrast, they described the ideal president as a silent actor who rarely revealed the reasons for decisions. Explanations, when offered, were to be done in "carefully selected language." The implication in this model is that faculty members were either not to be trusted or unable to deal with issues in a positive fashion.

As in other hierarchies, it was considered more important to engender respect for authority than to foster collegiality (Bing & Dye, 1992). The problem is that campuses do not function as hierarchies. People don't behave as they are supposed to in a chain of command. (Walker, 1986) Hostility, misunderstanding and stereotyping are the result. When things go wrong, administrators blame the breakdown of misbehaving, impractical and petty professor or students influenced to mischief. Freedman argues that much of this mutual disrespect has its origins in the excessive expansion of higher education that began in the 60's. In the years that followed, new

colleges sprang up virtually anywhere there was hope that the population could support them (Freedman, 1987). Campus Administration became a distance vocation, with its own national associations. Many others confused the academic hierarchy with the hiercharchies of other organizations, and acquired all the worst attributes of the bureaucrat, including high-handed incompetence (Freedman, 1987).

LEADERSHIP AND THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

At many academic institutions today, faculty seem to regard administrators as natural enemies rather than as colleagues in a common enterprise. This mutual antagonism between faculty and administration is rooted in the nature of American colleges and Universities. Colleges are essentially democratic and highly decentralized institutions. There are varying degrees of power and authority delegated to the president, provost, the deans, the faculty senate, college faculties, departments, special committees, faculty unions and other officials and groups (Diner, 1985). Those of us in higher education have a love affair with the participatory process. Tenure allows academicians to oppose administrative initiatives and to criticize top officials without fear of losing their jobs (Diner, 1985). Faculty view administrators as petty and expedient tyrants, bureaucratic, overbearing, unreceptive, and cowardly. The entire operation becomes a game of cops and robbers. (Walker, 1986)

Faculty members, in general, recognize a professional responsibility to protect faculty initiatives at all levels of sharing in academic government. This takes a

substantial amount of time and is not merely busy work. There is an underlying belief that faculty and administration should share in developing the broad outlines of institutional policy (Williams, 1987). Many faculty feel that active participation in the policy-making process is essential to over bureaucratization.

COLLABORATION AND FOCUSED SUPPORT

Today's colleges and universities may not be self-governing communities of scholars, but neither are they neatly organized, hierarchical bureaucracies We (faculty) inherently distrust those who seem eager to govern us. Our ideal administrator is one who reluctantly assumes the position out of obligation to the university and who eagerly anticipates returning to teaching and research. (Diner, 1985).

Most academic administrators came from the teaching ranks; they were offered administrative posts in part because faculty peers sanctioned their reputations for excellence and proper sensibilities. Does something get altered once they assume the mantle? Do they change their basic characters and forget their previous training and orientation entirely? Or are faculty members merely petulant complainers who really prefer anarchy to any form of government? (Walker, 1986)

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE INSTITUTION (OWNERNSHIP ...ACCOUNTABILITY?)

Faculty members in the decade of the 1990's are expected to contribute to departmental, college, and university committees and activities in addition to the more

traditional roles of research and instruction (Miller,1993). This type of participation is recognized as being fundamental to the continued operation and maintenance of the college. But many faculty have difficulty justifying the commitment of their personal resources if the result is only advisory (Miller 1993.) There is no additional compensation for their efforts, and some faculty have begun to resist participation on faculty committees. With few rewards for participation in governance, especially in terms of credit for tenure decisions, faculty have developed a resentment for working on campus committees. "Most faculty are really interested in teaching and research and would just as soon leave the administration of the institution to the administrators." (Baldridge and others, 1978, p. 75)

A number of faculty members have had some experience and frustration with committees. But at the same time expressed that some continued involvement on committee work was a necessity for at least being perceived by the administration as contributing to the institution's operation and success. (Miller, 1993)

Chairpersons have noticed this phenomena with some concern. Both the lack of involved attitude and the actual reduction of faculty input reduces the likelihood of developing a culture of ownership, which is crucial to policy acceptance. Benefit of institutional affiliation by faculty has historically been described as a side-effect of participation in institutional governance. Maehr & Braskamp (1986) noted that affiliation plays an important role in work motivation.

Many faculty members have noted that by their involvement, feelings of affinity toward the institution have been created and subsequent increased "care" for the employer arises. (Miller, 1993) So perhaps it could be inferred that the participation of faculty in the operation of the institution can provide a very real sense of ownership and mutual concern among administrators and faculty. Some feel it is their responsibility to become involved in governance and that they could "enhance" the quality of the institution through this type of participation. But some administrators may disagree with the contention that faculty participation is entirely a good thing. Increasing the number of players in the decision making process and decentralizing the authority to make decisions can slow the already judicious process of administrative resolution.

Few sensible people would contend that faculty members should run the campuses on their own; as professors, they have enough to do already. What is needed at most institutions is a return to mutually respectful collegiality between faculty and administration (Freedman, 1987). To some extent, the good guys-bad guys scenario is inevitable. Its tough for people who feel strongly about an issue to accept the fact that there are no easy fixes, that a kind heart and a good head aren't going to make the problems go away. Resentments result. Some antagonism between constituent groups in complicated organizations is therefore, inevitable and probably even healthy. (Walker, 1986)

No one who has worked in a college can doubt that it is an inherently political institution. "If we love politics and participatory democracy, In good Madisonian tradition we also distrust authority." (Diner, 1985, p. 60) Professors suspect others in the college and indeed, in their own department, of harboring aspirations for the institution that differ from their own. Hence, they firmly believe they must maximize their personal control over the institutional conditions under which they work. Distrust of the motives of certain other faculty and administrators, therefore abounds. And faculty, by virtue of our education and proclivities that brought us to academic careers in the first place, are uniquely adept at finding fault with things and articulating our criticisms (Diner, 1985). We are a verbal and analytical lot. If we use these skills daily to explain or examine natural and human phenomena, certainly we will also employ them to highlight the short-comings of our institutions, administrators and colleagues.

Faculty members are entrepreneurs of a sort with the "tools of production" in their own heads. The talents they possess must be conjured rather than commanded. For campuses to work best, there must be the freedom for talented and trained people to use independent judgment...(at least until it interferes with the work of others) (Walker, 1986). Campuses function best when the people who inhabit them are involved in decisions that affect their circumstances and when they are able to operate in institutional climates that are free, open, and communicative. This was the consensus of the seven administrators that I polled on my own campus. I distributed my list of questions to approximately nine different "administrative types" to ensure a

variety of views. Seven of them wrote extensive answers and conveyed a deep concern for the status of faculty/administrative relations at Ocean County College. I was encouraged to sense the extent of their regard for this issue. I had given the list of eight groups of questions to each and asked that they respond to the one group that resonated with them. Some of them answered all of them, which was enlightening and took more of their time than I intended. But most of them followed the directions and responded to one group in greater depth. What pervaded their answers was the value of shared information between faculty and administration, an acceptance of alternative perspectives regarding the information and the need for mutual respect. The other consistent point made by all was that we all share the same mission. There were honest revelations about some of the frustrations with ongoing conflicts, but even then a recognition that these problems did not interfere with the ability of faculty to deliver "excellent, even exceptional education" to their students.

Campuses function best when the people who inhabit them are involved in decisions that affect their circumstances and when they are able to operate in institutional climates that are free, open, and communicative. The task of administrators, then is not to punish the wicked or control the unsteady so much as it is to create an institutional climate in which good things can take place (Walker, 1986). Most deans, academic vice presidents, and presidents have risen from the ranks of the faculty, and at one point in their careers, at least, have shared the deep-seated faculty values of individualism, professionalism, and faculty control over academic matters.

But service in an administrative position changes this perspective-not, as some argue, because power corrupts, but rather because the imperatives of the position force one to view the world through different lenses (Diner, 1985). There are few of us in teaching who wish to be bothered with the minutiae of administration. Many prefer to leave the final disposition of most decisions to trustees or administrators. But what faculty members do require is that their views be heard and taken into account in the making of plans and policies (Kamber,1984).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A college is about the courses that are taught. Collegiality is a term that arises from that; we are all at our respective colleges to do one job. There is a notion of Community that has the power to bring the "we" and the "they" together. But what is our community at the Community College? In seminar it was mentioned that Bergen hired thirty new faculty recently. To what community were they hired? Are they faculty employees only? How does the affluence of their surrounding geographic community effect the notion of community? Today's education for administrators is managerial only, it is not usually grounded in a discipline. I have observed this in hospital administration over the last several years. Without the groundedness in some aspect of health care as a part of one's basic education, a wider gulf develops between the hospital managers and the workers. Communications have that distant clang of speaking to and through interpreters. Maybe that is just the way things are. Some of

us are on the inside, some of us are on the outside and we come from different perspectives. Can we have open dialogue on the polarities of our stances? I think it is possible. At my own college our president regularly has informal coffee hours where all manner of topics are discussed. For the past three years we have had three to five hour retreats in a setting away from the campus. The idea and implementation came from one of our senior faculty members. They have been well planned and open to all. This past Spring, the cost was picked up by the College. Over the past three years, faculty professional development monies have been reallocated with many more choices offered to the individual person regarding their disbursement. So, I am hopeful. And it is this hope I hold that led me to choose this topic. However, the background reading for this paper did not often fuel my hope. There was a fairly consistent good guy/bad guy scenario that permeated the articles. So is my hope based in my own naivete`? I am no youngster in either actual years or years as a faculty member in a college system. I think my hope is based in belief in a greater good. About education being available to persons without a family history or support or funds for further learning. I realize this sounds like a Community College Mission Statement and that is OK with me. I like to reread parts of those ideas annually. It keeps me grounded in what we're all about. All of us, the we and the they, bring our energies and our abilities to our teaching institutions to "do our thing." We need to turn some of our verbal proclivities and analytical capacities to the business of understanding each other's perspectives (Diner, 1985).

APENDIX A

Questions used for exploration:

1. How important is it for faculty to have a strong identification with their institution? How does a faculty member prioritize between their discipline career and their institutional career?

2. Could ceremonies and rituals (more common in four year colleges) help to strengthen the culture of the community college? Do symbolic events have a place in the community college setting? Could the participation in certain traditional activities help faculty and administrators to feel more of a shared mission?

3. Is the notion of community "alive and well" at your community college? When you think of community in that context, who is included?

4. How important is the willingness to share information between faculty and administration? What level of detail regarding institutional decisions is needed for faculty to be a part of the decision-making process?

5. Has the power of your Board of Trustees changed with the loss of the Board of Education in Trenton? How has that impacted on the faculty-administration relationship? Does your governance system provide any regular contact between faculty and the college Board of Trustees?

6. Have you ever participated in a large community college project that enriched your collegial and administrative relationships? Did this have an effect on your work?

7. Has your community college ever faced some real adversity and overcome the challenge it presented? How did that effect the atmosphere/morale of faculty and administrators?

8. Have you functioned as a faculty member with more than one type of leadership? Have you ever been in a setting you would describe as having participatory leadership? How does the type of leadership effect your role as a faculty member?

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A Greying Faculty:

Challenge or Stumbling Block

to the

Twenty-First Century

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for History 520
Princeton Mid-Career Fellowship Program, 1995-96

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A Greying Faculty: Challenge or Stumbling Block to the 21st Century

It is interesting to note what impact time has had on the problems involved with staffing at the Nation's colleges. Just a few short years ago many of the articles, dealing with an aging faculty, pointed to the conclusion that in the last part of the century and the early years of the next there would be an unprecedented demand for young faculty to take up the slack caused by a significant number of retirements. As a matter of fact in a recent issue of the Educational Record reference is made to a report by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, which indicated that between 1992 and 2005 there would be a need to hire over half a million new faculty. When one considers that the overall collegiate faculty, both full and part-time, is estimated at 887,000 the suggestion being made is rather startling. Part of this projection is based on replacement needs but another part is based on expanding enrollments. [1]

Backing up this projection is hard evidence indicating that the 18-19 year old cohort, which plateaued in the period 1976-80 and then declined in the period 1992-94 to below 7 million, (an overall 21% Falloff) will climb to 8 million by 2001 and 9 million by 2110. This represents an increase of about one-third from the lowpoint and it should also be noted that these are not pie in the sky figures but represent individuals who have already been born. [2]

Still another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is what has happened to many of the graduates of doctoral programs in the last several years. Any of us in the Academy know that, over the last several years, job opportunities have become much scarcer, especially in the traditional liberal arts areas. Using my own institution as an example (Union County College), major hiring has taken place in just two areas. One of these is in Teaching English as A Second Language, which is a response to fairly widespread immigration into the county. The other area, at least up until fairly recently, has been in health related fields, such as nursing and occupational and physical therapy. Yet even in these areas, especially nursing, the enrollments have begun to fall off. As a further indication of this problem is this quote from the article cited above."...there is the human toll exacted by doctoral programs that have disgorged tens of thousands of would-be professors into a saturated marketplace leading to thwarted expectations, still born careers, and massive graduate student indebtedness." [3]

Those of us who have had any experience with personnel matters can testify to the accuracy of that statement. Across my desk have come dozens of resumes from new Ph.D.'s looking for jobs, full or part time, academic year or summer, day or evening. Opening my mail today I came across a letter of inquiry from an A.B.D. in Political Science from Cornell, with 3 years teaching experience (probably part-time) looking for a position. My guess is (from the date of college graduation) that here is someone in his late 20's or early 30's looking to break into the teaching field full time. Not an atypical example of so many in the same circumstance.

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To some degree this then sets the parameters, but we need to add a number of additional factors. Among these is the lifting of the mandatory retirement age for faculty, impending changes in the Social Security legislation which will raise the basic eligibility age to 67, overall economic conditions when applied to higher education, i.e. inflation. Other factors such as what is happening to health costs and the differences between higher education institutions where research is a significant expectation and where it is not. These are some of the areas that will be explored in attempting to suggest appropriate solutions to this rather complicated problem, of how to encourage retirement, or looking at it another way, how to impact the makeup of college faculties to make them more realistically reflect societal composition.

As of December 31, 1993 required mandatory retirement of college faculty at age 70 expired. It is interesting to note the variety of reactions that this caused. In some cases, a faculty member still productive and still interested in carrying on was forced into retirement. At Princeton, for example, Marvin Bressler, in sociology was just such a casualty. [4]

However, there are other views about the impact of this event on the higher education community. Another article in the Chronicle stresses the fact that with institutional programs designed to encourage earlier faculty retirement, other problems may arise. For example with an early retirement option there is no control over who can take advantage of this opportunity. There may be individuals who you want to keep who opt to leave, and others stay whom you would like to see leave. [5]

Still another concern is expressed by Robert S. Hamada, Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago. "It's the ability of a department to renew and refresh itself with the appointment of new hires," he says. "If there becomes a preclusion of new hires because the older people refuse to turn over, there is a loss of fresh ideas." That sentiment is echoed in the same article by a former Vice President of Johns Hopkins who is quoted as saying "No matter how you figure it, the end of mandatory retirement cannot be a plus for any institution." [6]

One should also note those addressing this issue point to the fact that there are significant differences in the impact of this change between a research oriented institution and one that is exclusively oriented to teaching. The question of burnout appears to be a more significant factor in these latter institutions than in those where research is more significantly emphasized. This seems to be borne out by earlier retirements in institutions where teaching loads are heaviest.

The other interesting thing to note is that the abandonment of mandatory retirement really caused very little change in retirement ages. The assumption was made that with this change many, many more would stay on. However, this has not proved to be the case.

> The average age at retirement for faculty is sixty-five, three years greater than for workers in general, and is of little consequence before the age of sixty. Of those still on the faculty at ages sixty to sixty-four, only 45 percent continue past sixty-five and close to none after seventy. The removal of the seventy year retirement requirement will have very little effect. [7]

This fact is further reinforced by this statement. "Currently tenured faculty who do choose to work past 70 tend to be research oriented faculty at research universities, have lighter teaching loads, enjoy working with inspiring students, and are covered by pension programs that reward later retirement." [8]

Just what impact the changes in Social Security will have is at this point hard to discern. Right now the Act provides that individuals who delay their retirement to age 70 can increase their basic Social Security payments by a certain percentage for each year of that delay up through age 70. Changing the basic eligibility date to age 67 may have an impact since the assumption is that that will be the new baseline date from which 100% benefits will be paid.

Given this general background it is now time to explore the issue that is the primary focus of this paper. To put it directly what are the factors that might induce more "greying" faculty to retire, and why might that be an important issue to explore as we move into the 21st Century.

In order to appropriately explore this issue it is necessary to make some general assumptions. The first of these involves the impact that later retirement will have on the composition of the Academy. We need to look at the composition of a significant number of the "greying" faculty. A large number of these individuals completed their education in the sixties and seventies and became members of the collegiate establishment during the period of significant expansion which was from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies, They were more homogeneous than some of the more recent entries into the professorate. In terms of academic and socioeconomic backgrounds and gender they were

disproportionally "white and male, middle-and-upper-class....although it is the first academic generation to reflect the wave of post-World War II democratization of the academic professions." [9]

This immediately raises one issue that has concerned some as we move out of this century and become more concerned about the composition of college faculties. John Silber, President of Boston College is quick to point this out. "As long as we are keeping someone over the traditional age of retirement we are denying the opportunity to hire someone who is Black or female or young." [10]

Other concerns that are raised about "greying" faculty are that they may be out of touch with new developments in their disciplines. This comment applying particularly to faculty in non-research institutions. Still another way of framing this question is, will the faculty mix in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity begin to more closely resemble that of the general population? And how familiar is the present older faculty with the new technology which is fast imposing itself on many aspects of our lives including the lives of academics.

All of this is by way of setting the stage for what now becomes the more difficult part of this paper. If we assume that there is some positive good in trying to reshape the composition of the professorate what are some of the factors that might persuade "grey" faculty to give up their posts. It is to the exploration of that issue that the rest of this paper will be dedicated.

It seems to me that there a number of concerns that need to be addressed if any "early retirement" proposal is to have any hope for success. These are:

1. economic security and inflation
2. health coverage
3. flexibility
4. personal worth factors

Economic Security and Inflation

Assuming at the outset that most of those in higher education are members of some pension scheme what we need to propose is what might be done to have some of us opt to cash in at an earlier age. Among the proposals that have had some success is one which credits an individual with additional years of service since many of the plans base their retirement allowances on total years of service or total amounts of money that have been contributed. In this way the individual faculty member gains a larger pension by leaving early. Another variation on this theme would be to allow a faculty member a full year of pay on retirement and for tax purposes this might be paid out over the next couple of years. There is only one major danger in these schemes, and that is the impact of inflation on any fixed dollar retirement. In an article by David R. Allen entitled "The Faculty Perspective" in a CUPA publication he points out that a $50,000 pension, assuming a 5% inflation rate, would be worth only about $38,000 in 15 years. Certainly this is a concern but it might well be addressed by retirement seminars which stress the importance of a variable annuity that is part of the retirement package, one which responds to inflation by continuing to grow. Such plans are available.

Health coverage

This is one of the most perplexing issues that older citizens face. Over the last several years many facets of government have wrestled with the costs of health care. While most of us may be able to handle ordinary medical expenses what concerns and frightens us is the cost of catastrophic illness and most especially the costs involved in custodial care. These tend to be astronomical running from $30,000 a year up and requiring the depletion of assets before one can be covered under Medicaid, where the quality of care may not be to your liking. Covering ordinary health insurance costs for early retirees (those not yet 65) should be part of any sound early retirement scheme. Whether this requires the retiree to bear some of the burden is something that each institution needs to consider. At age 65 the individual automatically becomes part of the Medicare program and so a significant part of the concern about regular medical care costs are covered. This may require some supplementary insurance on the part of the individual but that ends up not being an astronomical expense. What I am suggesting is that institutions continue health care coverage for the early retiree until Medicare comes into play. An exceedingly generous institution might reimburse the retiree for the costs of his or her Medicare premium for one or two years after early retirement, since this is a relatively minor expense averaging, for a single person, about $500 per year.

Flexibility

The issue of retirement for someone who has spent several decades in productive work is obviously frightening. Whether retirement ends up being

required or voluntary makes no real difference. The basic concern is will I be able to adjust. Knowing that, institutions ought to be able to address that issue in a number of ways. Colleges and universities should consider the possibility of a phased out retirement program. A number of years ago the University of Virginia presented such an option to its faculty. It offered faculty the choice of reducing their teaching loads, over a five year period, but not beyond the age of 70. The reduced teaching load also carried with it the appropriate salary reduction but retained all other benefits with the exception of pension contributions which may have been in violation of IRS regulations. Such a reduced load was pegged at either 50% of load for each semester or the equivalent of 50% for the entire academic year. Once a decision was made the teaching load could not exceed the 50% mark. This was but one phase of Virginia's optional plan. Another approach was to offer retirement to those between the ages of 65 and 67 who had at least 10 years of service with the University. In this case once they signed such an agreement they were required to work for two years from the date of signing and in return for retiring the University agreed to pay them the equivalent of a year's salary paid in two installments in the year following retirement. [11]

While this plan has merit it lacks real flexibility. Another approach would be to allow for a reduction in teaching load each year. The number of years involved would be limited, but this would allow the faculty member to slide into retirement. One could envision a situation where an individual faculty member might want to see his or her teaching load reduced by 20% in year one and an additional 20-40% in year two. In other words there ought to be some

consideration given to making the individual comfortable in making that kind of life cycle change. Needless to say institutional concerns involving such things as planning and scheduling as well as the ease of replacements ought to be dealt with at the same time. In days of significant budgetary concern this offers the institution potential savings by reducing the salary of a "senior" professor and the possibility of either not filling that slot or employing adjuncts to fill any void in teaching assignments. A bonus payment may also be an inducement but that might well be offered as an option to increased payments into the appropriate retirement fund so that the faculty member's base pension would be larger.

These approaches allow for many variations but the key ingredient here ought to be some attempt to allay the concerns of the faculty member as he or she approaches what is certainly a major life crisis. A mutually agreed upon solution could act as encouragement for others to take advantage of the opportunity. More specific details on such an approach are part of the options described in the last part of this paper.

Personal Worth Factors

To some degree this is a continuation of the point just made. It seems to me that one of the significant aspects of any attempt to create a successful early retirement program is to accept as a major premise, the need to treat the faculty member as someone who has made and can continue to make a significant contribution to the institution. While the truth of the matter may well be that this will not be the case, it is important to use that idea as a basic assumption. To this end there are a number of things that might be done to at

least signal the fact that the institution still considers the retiree important.

Let me just detail a few. Continued use of the library, computer facilities and laboratories where that is possible. Perhaps the provision for some office space and access to duplicating or copying facilities. Insofar as space is concerned maybe even a carrel in the library. Keeping the faculty member informed about developments could be accomplished by making sure that he or she is on the mailing list for institutional newsletters or departmental minutes of meetings which might be of special interest ie new faculty, changes in key administrative assignments etc. Including the individual in social activities such as departmental parties or institutional celebrations is another way of saying look you are still an important part of this institution. Even keeping a faculty mailbox says something. In all of these what is being underscored is that the individual is still a part of the institution. Let the person himself decide when continued contact should be changed, when they no longer want the newsletter or invitations to events. If they move out of the area they may still want to maintain some contact and they should indicate how they would like to see that accomplished.

While the economic aspects of an early retirement can have beneficial effects on the institution, such as helping it bring in fresh ideas, or assisting in helping institutional membership to better reflect the composition of the greater society, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with individuals at a most fragile time in their lives. They have had little if any real experience with inactivity. Sabbaticals do not count because often there was a special purpose for the temporary interruption of instructional

activity. This situation is different. We are no longer talking about an interruption but something that is more permanent cessation. This being the case we need to do whatever we can to allay those concerns. While we need to address the economic and health concerns we cannot ignore the need to create a personal comfort zone for the prospective retiree. If we are successful in accomplishing this then "greying faculty" will provide significant opportunities for colleges and universities to move into the 21st. century as stronger institutions, better reflecting the composition of our society, with individuals better grounded in technology, perhaps better able to relate to the student body and yet both willing and exceedingly able to continue to pursue the twin goals of scholarship and teaching that characterize so many of the institutions of higher education in this country.

What follows are some models for early retirement programs as well as some questions potential retirees ought to raise about any proposed early retirement plan.

Suggested Early Retirement Models

Basic Assumption:

Institution is willing to offer such an option to all instructional staff members who are at least 60 years old and who have had at least 10 or more years of service at the institution.

Features of option:

For those who are at least 65 and who agree to teach for no more than three additional years, the College agrees to a reduced teaching load for such individuals that would amount to 60% or less of their normal load, with a salary reduction for each of the first two years equal to the amount of the reduced teaching load, i.e. 60% or less. However, the College agrees to continuing its contribution into the pension fund at the 100% rate. In the last year of this arrangement the College agrees, if the teaching load is 60% the College will pay 80% of the individual's salary and would also continue its contribution of 100% into the pension fund. If the individual has reduced his or her teaching load to 40% or 20% then the College would either pay 60% in the last year or 40% in the last year.

Once the faculty member has agreed to this arrangement there can be no change permitted except for a further reduction in their teaching load. In any case the arrangement can run no longer than 3 years.

Advantages:

From the College's standpoint the reduced load of at least 40% frees up a significant dollar amount allowing the College to either bank the savings or allow it an opportunity to bring new blood into its teaching staff at little if any additional expense. The advantage from the faculty member's standpoint is that rather than quitting all at once this allows for an adjustment period before complete phaseout.

Using some actual figures drawn from current salaries at Union County College for professors who are age 65 a reduced load to 60% with the appropriate reduction in salary would yield approximately $120,000 in savings and deducting the additional pension costs the savings would still be about $100,000. This would certainly provide a saving plus the ability to hire new younger faculty in appropriate discipline areas. Such savings would also be available in year 2 and perhaps be increased by a still further reduction in teaching load. Even when there is a need, at the end, to provide the "bonus" payment funds could have been saved in the previous two or three years to take care of that option. Needless to say providing the same option to those over 65 would yield even greater savings since those individuals are probably earning even greater salaries.

Still Another Model

Basic Assumption:

Statistics show that even with the removal of mandatory retirement there are still a significant number of individuals who would retire early given the right package.

Features of the option:

All faculty between 60 and not yet 65 would be offered the following option. A half year's salary and the College will continue to cover them on health insurance until Medicare kicks in at age 65. Such faculty members would also be offered priority in adjunct assignments but with the stipulation that they would be paid at the highest rate that any adjunct is currently earning.

Advantages:

Here once again the College would gain by reducing its salary expenditures among those who are earning higher salaries. The half year salary that would be saved should more than cover the costs of continuing medical insurance payments and the salary expense in the second year disappears completely and the only expenditure that still exists is the health insurance coverage for the period through age 65. The gain to the faculty member is the bonus of the half year's salary plus the assurance of health protection until Medicare becomes operative.

There are also a number of other variations which could be played on this theme. For those even under 60 the College may offer a bonus of 30% of annual salary plus some addition percentage for all years of service over a base of let's say 15 years. For example if a person has worked for 20 years and is under age 60 then the bonus might be 40% of base salary etc.

Still Another Variation:

This option would be offered to those who are 70 or over. A one time bonus of 70% of current salary in exchange for immediate retirement. Simply stated in terms of the College at which I teach this would involve 4 individuals whose combined salaries approximate almost $350,000. Seventy percent of those salaries would be approximately $240,000 which then provides the College with more than #100,000 to be used for replacement costs. Additional savings to the college would accrue by savings in medical insurance and contributions to the pension plan which certainly would be lower for any new faculty that would be hired. In addition the College could obviously stall for a year and fill the vacant courses with adjuncts or overload teaching by regular staff with the realization that they would have the full $300,000 to use the following year.

APPENDIX:

Questions that potential retirees should ask.

1. If there is an early retirement payout will it have to be paid in a single year or can it be spread out over a couple of years?

2. If I am under 65 will the College agree to pay for my health benefits until Medicare kicks in at age 65? If the College will not pay for all of the premium what share will it assume?

3. Will the College grant me emeriti privileges so that I can continue to use duplicating facilities, telephone for scholarly inquiry, access to computer assists, membership on any Committees that I wish to serve on?

4. Will the College offer me some office space even if it is space that I will have to share with others?

5. Can I have priority in adjunct assignments if I notify the College sufficiently in advance that I am available for such assignments? And what compensation can I expect?

6. If I am interested in taking a course at the College, or if my wife or college-age children (up to 22) are interested will tuition waivers still be available.

7. Once I make a decision is it irrevocable?

8. If the College has a reduced load retirement program, can I reduce the amount I want to teach each year until full retirement takes place?

FOOTNOTES

[1] "Whither the Faculty? The Changing Academic Market", Jack N. Shuster, Educational Record, Fall 1995, 30.

[2] Ibid.,30-31.

[3] Ibid., 29.

[4] Denise K. Magner, The Chronicle of Higher Education, July 28,1993, A15.

[5] Ibid., A15.

[6] Ibid., A15.

[7] Julius, Nancy B. and Krauss, Herbert J., eds, The Aging Work Force: A Guide for Higher Education Administration, "The Aging of Faculty in American Colleges and Universities: Demographic Trends and Implications", Robinson, Ira E., and Lee, Everett S., 53.

[8] Jeanne E. Bader, "Uncapping", Academe, January-February, 1995, 36.

[9] Rice, R. Eugene and Finkelstein, Martin J., New Directions for Teaching and Learning, "The Senior Faculty: A Portrait and Literature Review, Jossey-Bass, no.55, Fall 1993.

[10] Kathleen Kennedy Manzo,"Senior Power", Black Issues in Higher Education, June 16, 1994, 12.

[11] Chronister,Jay I.,and Reed, Kathrine M., "Assessing the Effectiveness of Voluntary Retirement Incentive Options for Faculty:A Case Study", CUPA Journal, Fall. 1994, 29-30.

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An Examination of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary Courses

sponsored by

The Humanities Department

Raritan Valley Community College

Bud McKinley

Neil Warrence

Raritan Valley Community College

Somerville, NJ

History 520

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May, 1996

An Examination of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary Courses

sponsored by

the Humanities Department of RVCC

The late Ernest Boyer has pointed out in an essay in Common Knowledge that what American students sorely need, yet rarely get, "is a more coherent view of knowledge and a more integrated, more authentic view of life."(1993) The faculty in Humanities and the Liberal Arts at Raritan Valley Community College has recognized for some years that the compartmentalization of knowledge along the lines of traditional academic disciplines is often counterproductive and frequently results in fragmentation This fragmentation has created an educational environment where, as Boyer describes, little children who begin by asking "why," after several years of formal learning , instead most frequently ask "Will we have this on the test?"

Over the last decade the faculty at RVCC have attempted in a number of ways to rectify this situation They have developed such courses as Humanities I and II and Quest Self, Society and Nature, which are interdisciplinary, thematically organized and team-taught courses within the Humanities Department

History

In 1984 eight RVCC faculty (then Somerset County Community College) received a New Jersey State Humanities Grant to invigorate its Humanities offerings with an

interdisciplinary team-taught course which would satisfy the requirements of World Civilization I and II and English I and II. The faculty chose a non-traditional history text, The West and the World organized on a thematic basis and authored by RVCC historian, Kevin Reilly. The course sought to incorporate diverse material and strategies including novels, field trips, guest lectures, films and the required reading of a national newspaper, The New York Times. The faculty incorporated appropriate topics from the Social Sciences and Art History and through guest lectures and readings. The team agreed on eight themes to be covered over the course of two semesters. These themes have remained basically unchanged through 1995. They include: Gender and Family; Cities and Civilization; Religion and Society ; War and Aggression; Politics and Culture; Economy and Ecology; Racism Nationalism and Internationalism; and Individuality and Mass Culture.

In the initial year, the Humanities course was reinforced by another grant for a Humanist in Residence. The recipient , NYU Professor Emeritus, Andrew Lavender, provided guest lectures, participated in and observed classes and made suggestions. The initial year was quite successful based on evaluations of students, faculty and the Humanist in Residence. The outside evaluator who reviewed all grants that year describes the Humanities Course, as " The Jewel in the Crown ." The grant was continued for two additional years to incorporate new faculty and experiment with new materials. Since that time this course has been incorporated as a permanent offering of the Humanities Department. It has been taught every semester as a day course usually with a team of three faculty. It has also been offered several times in the evening with two faculty members.

In 1992 RVCC received a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant to conduct a summer institute for sixteen faculty to prepare them to teach a new team-taught humanities course, Quest. Nearly half the summer participants were alumni of the previously mentioned Humanities course.

The unifying theme of the course is the archetypal pattern of the human Quest as delineated in Joseph Campbell's seminal text, The Hero with a Thousand Faces. In the three units of the course the Quest is examined from several perspectives. One of the underlying goals of the course is to encourage students to see themselves and their lives in the contexts of both the society and the wider cosmos of which they are a part. As Campbell has written in The Power of Myth.

> Society was there before you, it is there after you are gone, and you are a member of it. The myths that link you to your social group, the tribal myths, affirm that you are an organ of the larger organism. Society itself is an organ of the larger organism which is the landscape, the world in which the tribe moves. (72)

The inherent structure of this theme - the self, the self in relation to society, self and society in relation to the cosmos- provides the structure of the course.

The Quest Course, like the Humanities Course was well received by the faculty participants, students and outside evaluators. Nearly all faculty from the Summer Institute have taught a section of the course and many have taught three or four sections. The Quest Course has become a permanent offering of the Humanities Department and

represents a Humanities Elective. It is now offered at least once each semester with two faculty in all sessions.

Student Responses

In some respects, our study is related to that of our colleague, Thomas E. Valasek, with whom we taught Introduction to Humanities I and II in the academic year 1994-95. Tom's study (A Survey of Student Attitudes in "Introduction to Humanities," an Interdisciplinary Team-Taught General Education Course at Raritan Valley Community College [May 20, 1994]), prepared for the 1993-94 Mid-Career Fellowship Program, was a comparative examination of the responses of students taking Humanities I and II with those taking English I and/or World Civilization I. Twenty-six of his twenty-nine questions dealt with comparisons, while only three asked about the interdisciplinary Humanities course and features unique to it. The present study of student responses focuses solely on the Humanities course. The questionnaire for this study, to which twenty-five students responded, consists of fifteen written questions and an opportunity for written comments (See Appendix), it is followed up by extensive interviews with ten students chosen randomly. While we supply a simple statistical analysis (See Appendix) including the mean, standard deviation, etc., our study is not primarily statistical. Rather it explores further what we have believed to be the case from anecdotal evidence from students over the years, i.e. that students enjoy the course and like the interdisciplinary team-teaching approach it employs. We explore further exactly why they like it and what particular and unique benefits they believe it gave them. In the follow-up interviews, conducted approximately one year after the students completed the course, we probed this latter question in light of the additional year of college experience which they have now

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had. Accordingly, we rely heavily on the comments of the students themselves and, when appropriate, we have tried to use their exact words.

The questions break down into four clusters. The first cluster, consisting of Questions 1, 11, 12, and 13, deals explicitly with the interdisciplinary nature of the course. The second, consisting of Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, examines students' responses to our attempts to foster a more integrative understanding of the material. In this category, other questions probe the relevance of issues studied in class to current events. The third cluster, consisting of Questions 8, 9, and 14, looks explicitly at team teaching. Finally, the fourth cluster, consisting of Questions 10 and 15, deals with class trips.

Students were highly positive about the interdisciplinary nature of the course. The questions that addressed this aspect directly elicited mean responses of 4.20 to 4.36, with 5.0 being the most favorable response. Question 13 was one of several inverse order questions. It asked the following: "Studying history and literature together muddled issues and made history more difficult to understand." The mean response to this was 1.60, with 1.0 indicating the strongest disagreement. Responses to questions such as this enhanced our confidence in the reliability of the student responses.

In written comments and interviews, students expanded on these positive responses. The idea had been raised in class that one way of looking at literature that might be helpful in a course like this is to view literature as the interiorization of history. Several students referred to this concept and said that reading about individual characters made the movements and developments of history more human and more accessible. One student, referring to Question 11, wrote "I think that the question should read 'Studying history and literature together made the history more meaningful and alive for me.' At least that's

how I felt." Conversely, others said that knowing about the history enabled them to understand and enjoy the literature more fully. Several pointed out that for the first time in their lives they had actually enjoyed studying history. One said, "I hated history before this class, but it was finally taught in a way in which I could appreciate it." Another, somewhat less enthusiastically, wrote that "I hate history, but this class made it bearable."

The mean responses for the second cluster of questions was slightly lower, ranging from 4.04 to 4.64, with the score on the "check and balance" question (Number 5) being 1.44.

In our "Economy and Ecology" unit, the class read the first chapter of J.E. Lovelock's Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth (Oxford, 1979). Several students referred to this as giving them a new way to look at life on our planet: a more holistic and better integrated perspective. They suggested that the course as a whole gave them such a perspective, a few commented that something they had learned in one unit helped them understand new material from an another apparently unrelated unit more deeply. One said that he could "take what we learned from this class, and apply it to other classes." When asked what exactly he found he could apply, he answered, "Skills in reading, writing, and analytical thinking."

Most students also liked the use of the New York Times and the way in which current events were related to our units under study. One young man said he particularly liked that we brought up "hot topics from current events as they happened." While virtually none of our students had more than glanced at the Times prior to taking Humanities, most said that they now looked at it occasionally. None said they read it regularly. One woman commented that after discussions based on readings in the Times, she felt "like we were

more hungry for knowledge." Another wrote, "The historical aspects of this course were excellent. The approach of bringing current affairs and tying them into history was excellent also."

The most positive and enthusiastic responses were to team-teaching. In this area, the mean responses ranged from 4.56 to 4.64 with a mean for inverse order response of 1.44. In both written and verbal comments, student after student said how much they enjoyed and benefited from having three instructors in the classroom. One wrote "Having three teachers is an added bonus. It provides three unique opinions on different topics." Another wrote "I like having three instructors. As a group you bring a wealth of knowledge and viewpoints that can't be found in other classes." Finally, another student stated, "I think the three-teacher atmosphere made our class more of a family discussion and brought everyone in our class closer together."

In follow-up interviews this point was explored further, especially when students felt three instructors were necessary and / or provided benefits that two would not. Students proved quite insightful on this matter. Overwhelmingly they favored the three-instructor paradigm. They explained that with two teachers the range of possibilities was limited, that the teachers would either agree and there would then be no further debate, or that they would disagree and an adversarial situation with two opposing viewpoints would result. On the other hand, with three instructors the permutations and subtle nuances were almost endless. This model often resulted in one or more instructors modifying their position so that new syntheses and understandings frequently emerged.

Students also liked three instructors in terms of paper-grading. One wrote "I especially liked having three different opinions from three professors when grading my

papers." The role of writing and student papers in the course will be discussed further shortly.

Students also commented that the disagreements or differing orientation among professors provided them with a model for rational and civil debate. One student said that this "provided an example for the class. It was great to watch when you guys would argue." He went on to explain that this arguing yielded an "ice-breaker" and enabled the students to feel more comfortable in disagreeing with us or with each other. A recent statement by Professor John Fleming of Princeton University about an interdisciplinary course he team-teaches resonates strongly of the views of our students. In the April 1, 1996 edition of the Princeton Weekly Bulletin, Fleming says of his students: "They get to know us very well, too, and they begin to see that we professors are not in any kind of lockstep about the meaning of the texts or how to interpret them. So they see a good example of a mature plurality of opinion." It is pleasing that our approach and observations are shared by a wide-range of academic institutions.

The final cluster of questions focuses on class trips, the means here are 4.12 and 4.20. The general feeling in this area seemed to be that the trips were most valuable in creating social cohesion rather than in their academic value. Students described how they got to know one another, as well as the instructors, better. They were more enthusiastic about the two New York trips than about the trip to the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center.

Two other areas not explicitly addressed in this questionnaire, but examined in the follow-up interviews, were student papers and guest speakers. The matter of student writing, involving such issues as the efficacy of paper topics and paper-grading, was discussed at length in Professor Valasek's essay. The interest here is more in how the

student papers tied in to the overall question of an interdisciplinary and team-taught educational experience. The comments by students, one year after the completion of the course, tended to be positive. Several said they initially found the paper topics (which were expository and analytical and never merely narrative) difficult. However, they now find that writing of this sort has prepared them very well for other college courses. One said "I left the class with a better understanding of writing papers." Another said "I was forced to be thoughtful. I learned to tie ideas together to write a paper." And a third: "It prepared me well for college. My writing improved and this has helped me out tremendously."

The format for grading papers was this: each paper had two readers. If they disagreed by a letter grade or less the grades were averaged, if they disagreed by more than one letter grade, a third reader was used to resolve the issue. Each group of papers was distributed randomly among the readers so that in the course of a semester every student would almost certainly have input from all three faculty members. The students particularly enjoyed receiving comments and grades from three different instructors. This view was summarized succinctly by one student who said, "I liked having the different opinions from three professors when grading very much."

Students had to write one research paper; the assignment came from the "War and Aggression" unit. This unit encapsulates in microcosm the multidisciplinary and, when feasible and applicable, the multimedia approaches used in this course. In addition to readings in Kevin Reilly's text, students read the chapter on aggression in Edward O. Wilson's On Human Nature (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) and the chapter "War and Peace" from The Roots of War (New York, 1989) by Anthony Stevens, a British psychiatrist and

Jungian analyst. They also read the novel, The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien, a wounded Viet Nam veteran. They saw the movie Born on the Fourth of July, in addition, they heard a lecture from Hugh Boyle, an alumnus of the course who is now completing his doctoral dissertation in history at Brown University. Hugh was badly wounded in Viet Nam when his munitions truck ran over a land mine in Cambodia in the spring of 1970. He was kind enough to join us for a discussion about Viet Nam the day after his lecture. All of these elements worked together to get the students genuinely interested in the Viet Nam War, from its history and geography to its psychology and literature. Many students said that doing the research for this paper was the best paper-writing experience they had ever had.

One student said that after Hugh's lecture she felt she could "reach out and touch the face of Viet Nam." In general, the guest lecturers were well received and much appreciated. They were all people who brought an immediacy and a strong sense of passion and involvement to their subjects. In addition to Hugh Boyle, numerous students mentioned Dr. Ernst Rohardt. Ernst had been a member of the Navy in Nazi Germany and had also been a prisoner of war in a Russian camp. He contributed to the unit on "Individuality and Mass Culture." Another well-regarded guest lecturer was Professor Carroll Wilson, Chair of the English Department. Carroll had been a participant in a special seminar on Paul Robeson at Rutgers University. His presentation on Robeson, which was part of the "Racism, Nationalism, and Internationalism" unit, also contained film clips and excerpts of Robeson's singing. One student, who had been moved by Carroll's talk, said she read Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings immediately after hearing him speak.

Students were encouraged, in both the instructions for the questionnaires and in interviews, to discuss areas of the course which they did not like or thought could be improved. While some seemed reluctant to do so, three areas of concern did emerge. Several students felt too much time had been spent on African material. One wrote that "we should concentrate less on African works." Another wrote that there were "too many African books. Europe has history, culture, and appropriate works too." This surprised us, since there were only two works by African writers on the syllabus, Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (New York, 1959) and Mariama Ba's Scarlet Song (Essex, England, 1986 English translation). It is hard to know exactly why some students felt this way, since no one admitted to this feeling in an interview. Perhaps the racism in our society has once again reared its head here. It is also possible that since none of us had personal experience with Nigeria and Senegal the depth of our presentation might have been less than in other areas. It should be emphasized that even though several students made these comments, they still represented a very small minority of the entire class.

Another concern, also expressed by a small minority, was with Kevin Reilly's text, The West and the World, second edition (New York, 1989). One student wrote, "Reilly's readings are difficult to understand at times." Other students commented that Reilly's point of view and orientation sometimes got in the way of their fully grasping the material. However, upon discussion, they did agree that Reilly is successful at making clear what, in fact, is his point of view and that there was not really a blurring of fact and opinion. They seemed to feel in general that the difficult passages were made comprehensible after class discussion.

The final concern which was voiced dealt with students who did not participate. Several students said they did not like people who weren't involved. Further discussion clarified the point that it was actually not the people they disliked, but rather the fact that such people remained uninvolved. In a relatively large discussion class (30-35 students), this is perhaps inevitable. However, we may in the future be able to develop strategies which will make more likely the full participation of all students.

Summary

The student responses clearly indicated that they liked the interdisciplinary nature of this course. They felt that this approach made sense, was more holistic, and enabled them to delve more deeply into the topics discussed. They also liked the "extra" elements which this course provided, such as the guest speakers and class trips. They felt that these additions helped make the class special and brought everyone closer together. They were virtually unanimous in liking the team teaching and felt it was an indispensable part of the course's success. To conclude this part of the paper, we will once more let the students speak for themselves. One student wrote "This course was representative of the true college experience, which should be to be presented with new and challenging ideas and be able to discuss these ideas in an open forum." Another wrote "I liked learning about history and being challenged to really think. I liked having many different points of view, and three teachers were great. I truly enjoyed this class, it has enhanced my interest in history immensely." Finally, another student put it simply and directly when she said "We came in as high school seniors, and we came out college kids."

Faculty Responses

The faculty questionnaire was sent to thirteen faculty who have participated in team-taught interdisciplinary courses in the Humanities Department(Appendix 3). Eleven responses were used for the analysis. Two individuals with only a semester's experience declined participation. For the group analyzed, the average number of semesters team-teaching is eleven. The questionnaire contained twenty-six questions. The first seventeen questions asked faculty to respond using a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). These questions focused on faculty perceptions of students and their own participation in this team-taught interdisciplinary instruction. Questions 18 through 24 were open-ended, asking for written comments on their experiences. Question 25 asked faculty to rate their overall experience from very negative(1) to very positive(5) and Question 26 asked if they would be willing to be interviewed as part of this research. Names were optional.

Faculty Perceptions About Students

As indicated above, student evaluations of their experiences in team-taught interdisciplinary courses are very positive. Likewise, the perception of the faculty who responded to the questionnaire was also quite positive. Faculty claim that their students exhibit a greater interest in the course material (3.7) and that they seem to enjoy this type of instruction more than other types of classes at the college(3.9). Faculty commented that students enjoy the different teaching styles and points of view and having more than one instructor available for consultation and grading.

To a slightly lesser degree faculty responded that students spend more time preparing for this type of class(3.64). They were, however, less sure that this interest leads to greater mastery of content and skills(3.3). They believe students are more likely to use consultation periods and to seek advice from instructors(3.7). Faculty comments suggest that this positive factor is created both by the format of the course as well as by the styles of the instructors.

Faculty's general perception is that interdisciplinary team-taught classes are not significantly more successful than their regular instruction in retaining students(2.6). In fact, several faculty believe that the retention rate in team-taught courses is lower than in their regular classes. One experienced faculty member commented that "the kind of student that is drawn to this type of course often has many areas of interest competing for time as well as the standard family and work obligations." These factors impact on persistence for community college students. Other faculty opined that, because of the extended time frame in the Humanities Course and the close relationships that develop, faculty feel the loss of students more in this type of teaching. Because the Humanities Course is a two-semester sequence, students not opting for the second semester might influence this perception. Retention is clearly an area for future research in interdisciplinary courses. The most recent college statistics suggest an official retention rate equal to other similar liberal arts courses. Unlike studies at other community colleges such as the 1991 study at Solano Community College in California, our team-taught course has not produced higher persistence rates.

The final observation of faculty is that, on average, students find few problems with the team grading process. In fact, as mentioned above, most students see team

grading as a positive factor. Several faculty responses, however, indicate that team grading was a problem for a few students. This difference in perception may reflect individual incidents or faculty discomfort with the process in certain situations. In interviews, faculty did point out that "there are always problems with grading and that the team grading was sometimes a plus because there was another faculty member to back up decisions." Other faculty stated that grading problems are "about the same or less" than in regular courses.

Superior Learning Environment

Faculty were asked to cite evidence, anecdotal or scientific, that team-taught interdisciplinary courses were superior as a learning environment. Faculty stated that the overwhelming sense from students over the years, is that integrating different kinds of experiences, materials and points of view require them to think and write at a level that is not often present in a traditional course. Faculty recounted examples of comments from students who cite class projects such as the walking tour of lower Manhattan, which required pre-trip study, a presentation on site and a follow-up paper, as examples of assignments that prepared them for the kind of learning that is later required in upper-division courses at four-year institutions. Other students noted the guest lectures and questions and answer sessions with participants from WWII and The Vietnam War totally changed their attitudes toward war and aggression and kindled a desire to know more about topic. Hugh Boyle of Brown University said the course "fundamentally changed my attitude about historical study so much so that I switched my major from the sciences to

history " In fact in a recent conversation he claimed " It was the best course I had at any level of education "

The teachers themselves felt that team-teaching in an interdisciplinary format offered them an opportunity to create a superior climate for learning Many stated that teaching with another instructor allowed them to concentrate more on teaching and less on managing a class Some related that one of the most positive aspects of team-teaching was learning new material and being able to respond to colleagues' ideas on the spot Others thought, and the student responses confirmed, as one instructor put it, "that diversity of opinion and approach creates a much more lively classroom atmosphere for both students and faculty "

Faculty from the English Department cited studies which demonstrated that reading and writing about more sophisticated material produced a higher level of cognitive skills in these areas E D Hirsch Jr in Cultural Literacy has pointed out that while community college students possessed the necessary strategies for reading and writing they were not exposed to sufficient background material to achieve a high level of general literacy (47) Faculty confirm that these courses produce "students who feel more confident about being able to process complicated material and then write about it." This type of course helps to fill the void Hirsch indicates is present in our students' experience

Faculty Observations About Participation in Team- Taught Interdisciplinary Teaching

Faculty report that the things they were most anxious about prior to their involvement with team-taught interdisciplinary teaching, such as compatibility with other

faculty, team grading and performance anxiety turned out not to be problems. Respondents stated that they had developed very positive relationships with other team members(4.36). In addition, there were no significant problems reported in working out a system of team grading. In fact, the faculty and the students found very positive aspects of team grading. Some faculty stated they were pleasantly surprised to see how easy it was to define an "A", as well as a "D" or an "F" for the team. Faculty reported some slight performance anxiety,(3.18) but their comments suggest their comfort level rose considerably over time and with the number of semesters they participated in the shared classroom.

Impact on Teaching

The clearest positive benefit from team-taught interdisciplinary courses is that faculty gain more enthusiasm for teaching in general (4.27) and learn significant new material outside of their discipline (4.45). The written comments and statements from interviews strongly suggest team teaching provide more of a challenge as well as opportunities for learning and teaching material outside their discipline. They state that by, in effect, becoming a student for some material they gain new insights into their students and the learning process. This allow them to become a bridge for students with the other "expert" faculty in the classroom. Faculty note that while this type of teaching takes more time and effort it is also quite rewarding. One professor stated "It was a challenge and hard work but gratifying. It made me feel very positive about learning and teaching."

Faculty indicate they learned new teaching strategies from those with whom they shared the classroom (3.73). Experience with this type of teaching helps improve the quality of their own instruction (3.73). Though our questionnaire did not ask, some respondents volunteered that this process gave them more confidence that their current teaching methods were already very effective. They cited evidence of the feedback from their colleagues and from students that substantiate this new confidence in their expertise and the methods they employ in their other classes.

Our questionnaire asked faculty to provide written comments about the most positive and negative aspects of teaming with other faculty in interdisciplinary teaching. The near unanimous response on the positive side was that they enjoyed the interchange of ideas and the building on the ideas of colleagues. They were very positive about having this opportunity to learn new material and appreciated the opportunity to reinvigorate their teaching. One instructor mentioned "how enjoyable it is to be able to observe the reactions of students to the teaching that was going on!"

There was no similar clustering of negative responses. Nearly a third stated they experienced no negative aspects, another third saw no significant drawbacks but when pushed could cite one item. The other third experienced some problems, such as finding the amount of time necessary to prepare for this type of course. Only one person claimed a negative impact on their teaching. In a follow-up interview with this teacher it was discovered that only one of several team-teaching experiences was negative and the overall experience was positive.

Respondents were also asked to provide advice for faculty who were considering this type of teaching. Faculty responses were suprisingly homogeneous. The

overwhelming advice from faculty was to suggest that other faculty try this type of teaching. Faculty suggested various strategies to insure that the experience is a profitable one. First, visit each other's classes. Be sure you can work together harmoniously. Nearly two-thirds suggested that adequate consultation and planning time be built into the schedule. The ideal time for such planning for most participants was the hour immediately preceding the class period. Others suggested that instructors "should be open and ready to share their classroom" and that " faculty must be open to change and ready to compromise on the ways they traditionally conduct classes." It is also important to have good coordination with academic advisors. It is imperative that these advisors understand the course and its objectives and communicate this information to students during orientation. If necessary faculty should be prepared to attend these orientation session and speak directly with the students. In the case of our courses at RVCC, our success has been based on our close working relationship with the advising staff and their recognition of the value of interdisciplinary team-teaching instruction for the students.

All respondents said they plan to be part of a team-taught interdisciplinary course in the future and they recommend this experience to others. All suggest that the college should expand its offerings of this type of class, and all said they would volunteer to participate in grant writing to expand these offerings. All respondents signed their questionnaires and agreed to be interviewed for this project.

The clearest consensus that emerged from the questionnaire was the overall satisfaction level of participants with the entire team teaching experience (4.5). Even individuals who experienced some negative aspects rated their overall experience as very positive. Only one individual rated their overall experience as somewhat negative. In a

subsequent interview the instructor stated that she started teaching two interdisciplinary courses at the same time. She said this was "too much," and in addition she experienced some difficulty in adjusting to sharing control of the classroom. She also mentioned that the experience in spite of the negative aspects, made her "a better teacher," and she looked forward to a more positive team-teaching experience in the future. As this example illustrates the satisfaction level was generally higher in faculty with the most experience. The transition to sharing a classroom and committing to learning and teaching new material can have some bumps in the beginning but becomes smoother and more rewarding with experience.

Conclusions

Faculty and students find team-taught interdisciplinary teaching both stimulating and enjoyable. Students confirm that an holistic approach to the study of English and History lead to a broader and deeper understanding of the themes studied. They cite guest speakers and field trips as very positive aspects of the experience. Students enjoy the study of history with a contemporary component and they are very positive about a learning environment which allows for the inclusion of topical issues when they arise. Faculty perceptions about students substantiate these views. Faculty agree that having more than one instructor and an interdisciplinary approach produces a superior teaching and learning environment.

Responses to the Faculty questionnaire indicate that problems they envisioned, such as conflicts over grading, did not materialize. Faculty found teaching in this mode quite invigorating since they believe it improves their teaching through learning new

materials and strategies. They enjoy the opportunity to exchange and develop ideas in class with colleagues.

Faculty strongly urge other faculty members to try this type of teaching. They do suggest, however, first to check for compatibility, and the availability of adequate time for preparation and consultation. They also recommend that the administration provide more opportunities for these team-taught courses. Furthermore, they are willing to work with the college to secure grants for this purpose. Faculty data strongly suggest that satisfaction with team-taught interdisciplinary instruction increases with experience.

Areas for further investigation and research include comparative and longitudinal studies of retention statistics in team-taught and traditional courses, strategies for encouraging student participation and a comparison of the Quest Course and the Humanities Course in terms of student outcomes.

Postscript

On April 19, 1996, RVCC hosted a conference sponsored by the National Science Foundation in cooperation with the NJCATE on effective teaching strategies and pedagogy. Present at this conference were Quest and Humanities Faculty as well as instructors who had combined science and economics, and psychology and literature in a team-teaching format. We shared the data from our research as part of a panel entitled "The Pleasures and Perils of Team Teaching." Panelists from RVCC and other institutions agreed with our basic findings. In particular, they agreed that having more than one instructor is positive for both faculty and students. They also agreed that the most positive factor for faculty in this type of teaching is the opportunity to build on colleagues'

ideas in the classroom. They found our advice for new faculty in this study to be worthwhile and they suggested that it be more widely shared with faculty planning to engage in interdisciplinary team-teaching.

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Appendix

RESULTS

Supplemental Survey of Student Attitudes
About Introduction to Humanities II
-- At Raritan Valley Community College

Directions: Using your experience in Introduction to Humanities II, indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below, using the following number scale:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = undecided

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

STD. DEV.	MEAN	
.76	4.20	1. The interdisciplinary nature of the course helped me understand the issues covered in the course more deeply.
.75	4.16	2. The different units in the course worked together in such a way that each unit helped illuminate the issues in another unit.
.57	4.64	3. The course showed me that history is an ongoing process and helped me see the relationship between past and present.
.76	4.20	4. The course increased my understanding of important current events more deeply.
.58	1.44	5. The issues discussed in class had no relationship to important issues of the present.
.64	4.08	6. The course encouraged me to analyze issues and think for myself with more confidence.
.89	4.04	7. The atmosphere in the class encouraged me to question some of my old beliefs and assumptions.
.49	4.64	8. Having more than one instructor helped provide models for expressing honest intellectual disagreement.
.87	4.56	9. Having more than one instructor helped me understand that on complex issues there is often no simple answer.
.82	4.20	10. The class trips helped tie in classroom learning with experiential learning.
.49	4.36	11. Studying history and literature together made the literature more meaningful and alive for me.

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STD. DEV.	MEAN	
.57	4.36	12. Studying history and literature together made me more aware of the human side of history (i.e. the impact of events on individual people's lives).
.58	1.60	13. Studying history and literature together muddled issues and made history more difficult to understand.
.82	1.44	14. Having more than one instructor was unsettling and often left me feeling confused.
.93	4.12	15. The class trips made some of the issues studied more alive and meaningful for me.

Please add any comments you would like to make about any of these questions and / or any other aspect of the course.

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RESULTS

Interdisciplinary Team-Teaching Assessment Instrument

As part of my research project for the Mid-Career Fellowship at Princeton University I am studying the impact of interdisciplinary teams on the faculty involved. My focus is those of you who have taught the Humanities I and II and the Quest Course.

You can be sure that the information you share will be held in confidentiality. I would appreciate your signing your questionnaire if you feel comfortable doing so, since I may wish to contact you with some follow-up questions for the study. Please feel free to suggest any additional areas of exploration regarding the impact this type of teaching has on those who participate in it.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and I will be happy to share the results of my research with you when it is completed.

Bud McKinley

Directions: Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements listed below. Use the following key:

SA Strongly Agree
A Agree
U Undecided
D Disagree
SD Strongly Disagree

Students in interdisciplinary team taught courses when compared to traditionally taught courses:

						MEAN	STD.DEV.
1. exhibited a greater interest in course material.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.70	1.06
2. demonstrated greater mastery of content and skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.30	.95
3. spent more time preparing for class.	SA	A	U	D	SD	2.70	.48
4. were more likely to use consultation or seek advice.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.70	1.06
5. had a higher retention rate.	SA	A	U	D	SD	2.60	1.07
6. enjoyed the class more.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.90	1.10
7. had problems with team grading.	SA	A	U	D	SD	2.55	1.29

As a teacher in an interdisciplinary team taught course I

8. had positive relationships with other team members.	SA	A	U	D	SD	4.36	.81
9. spent more time in class preparation.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.64	1.21
10. experienced some performance anxiety.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.18	1.17
11. had some problems with team grading.	SA	A	U	D	SD	2.27	1.10
12. developed new teaching strategies.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.82	.98
13. improved my overall quality of instruction.	SA	A	U	D	SD	3.73	1.01
14. learned significant material outside my area.	SA	A	U	D	SD	4.45	.52
15. plan to teach this type of course in the future.	SA	A	U	D	SD	4.36	.67
16. would highly recommend team teaching to other faculty.	SA	A	U	D	SD	4.27	.79
17. have gained more enthusiasm for teaching in general.	SA	A	U	D	SD	4.27	.65

How many semesters have you taught the Quest Course? _____

How many semesters have you taught the Humanities Course? _____

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18 What do you like most about interdisciplinary team-teaching?

19 What do you like least about interdisciplinary team-teaching?

20 What advice what you give faculty who are considering interdisciplinary team -teaching?

21 Do you believe RVCC should offer more courses using the interdisciplinary team- teaching format?

22 Is there anything that would facilitate your participation in interdisciplinary team- taught courses in the future?

23 Do you have any evidence, empirical or anecdotal, that interdisciplinary team-teaching is a superior learning environment for students? If so, please describe.

24 Would you participate in grant writing to expand offerings in interdisciplinary team -taught courses? All Yes.

25 How would you rate your overall experience in team teaching ?

	MEAN	STD. DEV.
very negative somewhat negative neutral positive very positive	4.45	.69

26 May I contact you for an interview regarding team teaching? All Yes.
yes no

Name (optional) All Signed

FALL 1996 COURSE OFFERING

Introduction to Humanities I

6 credits (3 credits English I, 3 credits World Civilization I)

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Professors McKinley and Warrence

Tuesday & Thursday
5:00 PM - 7:40 PM

Professors Bodino and Reilly

History with an emphasis on today's issues.
English Composition with a focus on stimulating topics.
Team-taught by English and history faculty.

Innovative.....Challenging.....Relevant

TOPICS:
Gender and Family
Cities and Civilization
Religion and Society
War and Peace

HIGHLIGHTS:
Walking tour of lower Manhattan
Visit to Buddhist Monastery
Guest lecture with slides on Vietnam
Select novels and films
Individual attention

For more information call 231-8816

Raritan Valley Community College
Route 28 & Lamington Road, North Branch, New Jersey

Quest

Self, Society, and Nature

This 3-credit course, taught by faculty from different disciplines, explores:
The Self: The mythology, psychology, and history of the individual;
The Self & Society: Conflict and conformity;
The Self & Nature: Human origins, evolution, and ecology;

Prerequisite: English I
Quest transfers as a Humanities or general education elective.

Quest

(Course #54-202,Section 51)
is taught by Professors Kevin Reilly and Angela Bodino

on Mondays from 5:00 to 7:40 pm

The Quest course has been supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

Raritan Valley Community College

SPRING COURSE OFFERING

Introduction to Humanities II

6 credits (3 credits English II, 3 credits World Civilization II)

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Professors McKinley, Valasek and Warrence

History with an emphasis on today's issues.
English Composition with a focus on stimulating topics.
Team-taught by English and History faculty.
Prerequisite - English I or Humanities I

Innovative.....Challenging.....Relevant

TOPICS:
Politics and Culture
Economy and Ecology
Racism and Nationalism
Individuality and Mass Culture

HIGHLIGHTS:
Trip to New York City and Ellis Island
Guest Lecturers
Select Novels and Films
Individual Attention

For more information call (908) 231-8816

Raritan Valley Community College
Route 28 & Lamington Road, North Branch, New Jersey